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90 MINUTES WITH
SHAWN MICHAELS!
A Revealing "Press Conference"

SCOTT STEINER

THE SUPERSTAR THE WWF LET SLIP AWAY

October 2000

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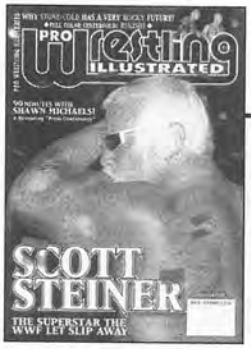

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FROM THE DESK OF...

WHY, I'VE BEEN asked, does *PWI* insist on publishing "WWF vs. WCW: The Monday Night War" when the WWF continually trounces WCW in the ratings. Is it proper to call the *Raw* vs. *Nitro* Monday night matchup a war at this point? Is it really even a competitive situation? Are we just trying to make WCW look bad?

Since some of those questions have come from people I work with on a daily basis, I figured that a lot of our readers must have similar questions. Since I've shared my viewpoint internally, I might as well let everyone in on my thinking.

First, some background. We began running this department in the July 1996 edition of *PWI*. At the time, the two companies were practically dead-even in terms of Nielsen numbers. Interestingly enough, the numbers posted by both companies at the time were below those of what "poor" WCW has garnered in recent months, while the WWF has more than doubled its rating. That speaks volumes about the overall strength of the wrestling business, but I digress.

At the time we started this monthly comparison, we gave no consideration to what might happen if one company pulled far in front of the other. In time, that's exactly what happened. As we all know, it was WCW that jumped out to what at one point seemed an insurmountable lead. Why, there were times when the *replay* of *Nitro* would almost outdraw *Raw*. At some point during *Nitro's* 83 straight Nielsen ratings victories (some coming close to the 2x that the WWF enjoys now), I recall that some people began to question why we continued to even bother calling it a war. *Hmmm.*

The date April 13, 1998, is one wrestling fans should commit to memory. It was on that day that the WWF stopped WCW's streak, with *Raw* posting a 4.6 to 4.3 victory over *Nitro*. In subsequent weeks, *Nitro* posted some infrequent victories, but essentially, it's been all WWF ever since.

Are we trying to make WCW look bad? Of course not—just as we had no interest in making the WWF look bad while printing the Nielsen scores during the 83-week streak. We (or maybe just I) believe that a war is a war until one party surrenders. WCW has been down, but there has been no thought given to surrendering. Eric Bischoff and Vince Russo have had their ups and down since being given creative control over the company, but progress is being made. I (and I know I'm not alone on this one) have been very critical of the place in history they have carved out for Courteney Cox's husband, but the two hours actually go by in what seems like two hours, as opposed to three or four before Bischoff and Russo took over.

That said, I do not anticipate a date when WCW will actually win a head-to-head battle with the WWF. But there is a lot more to the WWF vs. WCW pages than the mere reporting of scores. The week-by-week analysis of Senior Writer Harry Burkett helps put the entire wrestling business into perspective. I, as an editor, thoroughly enjoy reading it, and I think the readers are behind me on this. If not, you're always welcome to voice your opinion on this or any subject with a letter or e-mail to the editor (turn the page for the addresses).

One further point needs to be made: It's a credit to both the WWF and WCW that at no time during the entire four years of running this comparison has a company representative even hinted at any displeasure over seeing its numbers in print. That tells me one of three things: They've developed thick skins, they are mature enough to accept the truth, or the company that's on the short end has confidence in their ability to come back and one day force their rival into the reverse role.

The day we sense that either company feels it can no longer be competitive, we'll pull the "War" pages right out of the magazine. But knowing what's at stake and who runs the two companies, I don't see that day ever coming.

Stu Saks
Publisher

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SUPERCARD EXTRAVAGANZA

The Rock survived WrestleMania 2000, but was still screwed out of the WWF World heavyweight title (temporarily). Super Crazy stunned The Network by upsetting Rhino for the ECW TV title at Living Dangerously. And Sid Vicious continued his dominance of WCW by soundly defeating Jeff Jarrett at Uncensored.

The editors of *PWI* featured those three cards as the supercards of 2000 in the August 2000 issue. Some readers agreed with our selection of supercards, but others weren't so satisfied.

"For the second year in a row, WrestleMania really disappointed me," wrote Ed Blakely of Loganville, Georgia. "It just didn't seem special."

"With Rob Van Dam injured, I didn't know what to expect from Living Dangerously," e-mailed Billy Wick of Cherry Hill, New Jersey. "But Paul Heyman and his crew did not disappoint. ECW put on another great pay-per-view."

"I loved that Sid Vicious was able to squelch Jeff Jarrett at Uncensored," wrote Nancy Pead of Colorado Springs, Colorado. "Now I just wish Sid would return and take care of The New Blood."

☎ THE ARQUETTE THING

Lou Thesz. Gene Kiniski. Terry Funk. Harley Race. Dusty Rhodes. Ric Flair. Sting. Big Van Vader. David Arquette?

Give me a break, WCW.

WILLIAM P. JANSEN
Dellwood, MO

I gave WCW, Vince Russo, and Eric Bischoff a chance to redeem themselves, but I can suffer the promotion no longer. Not after David Arquette won the WCW World title. When I want to see a movie star, I go see a movie. When I want to watch wrestling, I turn on a wrestling program.

I thought WCW's miserable experiments with Dennis Rodman and Master P would have made the promotion realize that entertainers who try to wrestle are worthless commodities. Apparently, I was wrong.

RAPHAEL LOPEZ
Oceanside, CA

I'm one of the few people who believes that David Arquette winning the WCW World heavyweight title wasn't such a bad thing to have happen to WCW.

Did you see all the mainstream media coverage of Arquette's title win? You couldn't avoid it. It was all over the place. And enough about how Arquette's title reign hurts the lineage of the title. Big deal. If David Arquette holding the WCW World title hurts Ric Flair's first title reign of nearly two years back in the early-'80s, it's only because wrestling fans can't put things in perspective.

No, David Arquette is not one of the best WCW/NWA champions of all-time. In fact, he's the worst WCW/NWA World champion by a large margin, but everybody knows that. Everybody recognizes that. It's not as if WCW is saying that David Arquette is the second coming of Ed "Strangler" Lewis.

CHAD ROLLINS
Darby, PA

David Arquette, wrapping his not-so-massive arms around the thick neck of Bill Goldberg at the premier of *Ready To Rumble*, stirred up a ton of controversy with his WCW World title win.

BACKLASH BACKLASH

I'm a little disturbed by the way Vince McMahon treated WWF fans at the Backlash pay-per-view.

Because Vince perceived Steve Austin to be a threat to the World title reign of Triple-H, he made a point of trying to keep Austin from the arena. He even said to the fans at the MCI Center and those watching on pay-per-view that the card had the disclaimer "subject to change" attached to it.

I don't care if a card is "subject to change." If a wrestler is promised to be

there, then a wrestler is promised to be there, no matter whom he is a threat to. I'll tell you this, too. If Vince had managed to keep Austin off the pay-per-view, I would have demanded my money back.

ERIC SILVER
Tinley Park, IL

JUST INCREDIBLE

Justin Credible is going to be a great ECW World champion. He has all the skills, all the power, and all the credibility to hold the ECW World title and establish it as the most hard-won and important world title in the sport today.

With former champs Shane Douglas, Tazz, and Mike Awesome all leaving ECW shortly after or during their title reigns, the promotion needs a World champion that it can depend upon for the foreseeable future.

Justin Credible is that man.

SCOTTY BERCH
Sellers, SC

Trish Stratus took a lot of abuse at the hands of Buh Buh Ray Dudley at Backlash. Reader Heather Helmer thinks Stratus deserved it.

TABLE FOR ONE

I don't care what anything thinks—Trish Stratus deserved to go through a table at the hands of Buh Buh Ray Dudley. After watching her tease Buh Buh by walking around nearly naked and throwing out innuendo after innuendo, she totally deserved every ounce of pain she felt at Backlash.

Maybe next time a WWF female will think twice about using her womanly wiles when it comes to getting her guy a win.

HEATHER HELMER
Newport, MA

CLIQUE CRAZY

It's very interesting to watch the way various cliques have formed within WCW since the return of Vince Russo and Eric Bischoff. At first glance, you have The New Blood and Millionaires Club. With all the inner turmoil WCW has experienced over the past few years, you had to know that these two factions would eventually form and that the ensuing feud would blow the roof off the federation.

Then you have the group known as The Misfits. Chavo Guerrero Jr., Lash LeRoux, Hugh Morrus, and Van Hammer comprise this group. They're not even close to being Millionaires Club members, and they're not part of the New Blood movement, either. They're kind of out in the middle of nowhere looking for a foothold—and footholds are hard to come by in WCW these days.

How this all plays out should be very interesting, and I'm sure that we'll see even more cliques crop up and some of the existing ones splinter.

Through all this, I only ask for one thing: No more NWO!

DENNIS YOUNG
Foster, TX

CYRUS SYMPTOMS

I'm having a hard time figuring out the motives of Cyrus. According to him, he is TNN's liaison to ECW, but he seems to be doing everything in his power to ruin ECW!

I could see if Cyrus was just trying to secure a position as the color commentator on *ECW On TNN*, but he seems to be doing more than that. If he knows as much about wrestling as he says he does and really wants ECW to help the ratings of *Rollerjam* and the other junk programs on TNN, he would let ECW be ECW and stop hassling Paul Heyman. If not, ECW is going to be far less than what it could be, and *ECW On TNN* won't help out TNN at all.

TODD STORI
Layton, NJ □

10 YEARS AGO IN PWI

The cover of the October 1990 issue of *PWI* featured Sting. On the cusp of winning his first NWA World title, Sting was experiencing the difficulties of success for the very first time. Not only were his enemies banding together, but many of his friends had also begun acting suspiciously.

Elsewhere in the magazine: Paul Orndorff sent a message to Ric Flair by pinning Tully Blanchard ... During Hulk Hogan's absence from the WWF, Tugboat tried to fill Hogan's void. *PWI* was worried he would pay for it ... *PWI* questioned whether The Ultimate Warrior would ever escape the shadow of Hulk Hogan ... *PWI* wondered how The Road Warriors would fare in the WWF ... Teddy Long spoke out in "Press Conference" ... Brutus Beefcake was featured in the color pinup.

Magazine availability: Limited.

RINGSIDE

With Will Welsh

THOUGH THEY MIGHT not have entered the WWF with the to-do of **Chris Jericho** or the bang of **The Big Show**, when **The Radicals–Chris Benoit**, **Eddie Guerrero**, **Dean Malenko**, and **Perry Saturn**—did make their WWF debut, they were under an intense amount of pressure to show federation officials that they belonged in the world's premier wrestling organization. Because of this, many wrestling insiders, including some here at *PWI,* questioned whether the foursome would be able to survive the rigors of the WWF and emerge as unified as they were when they first entered.

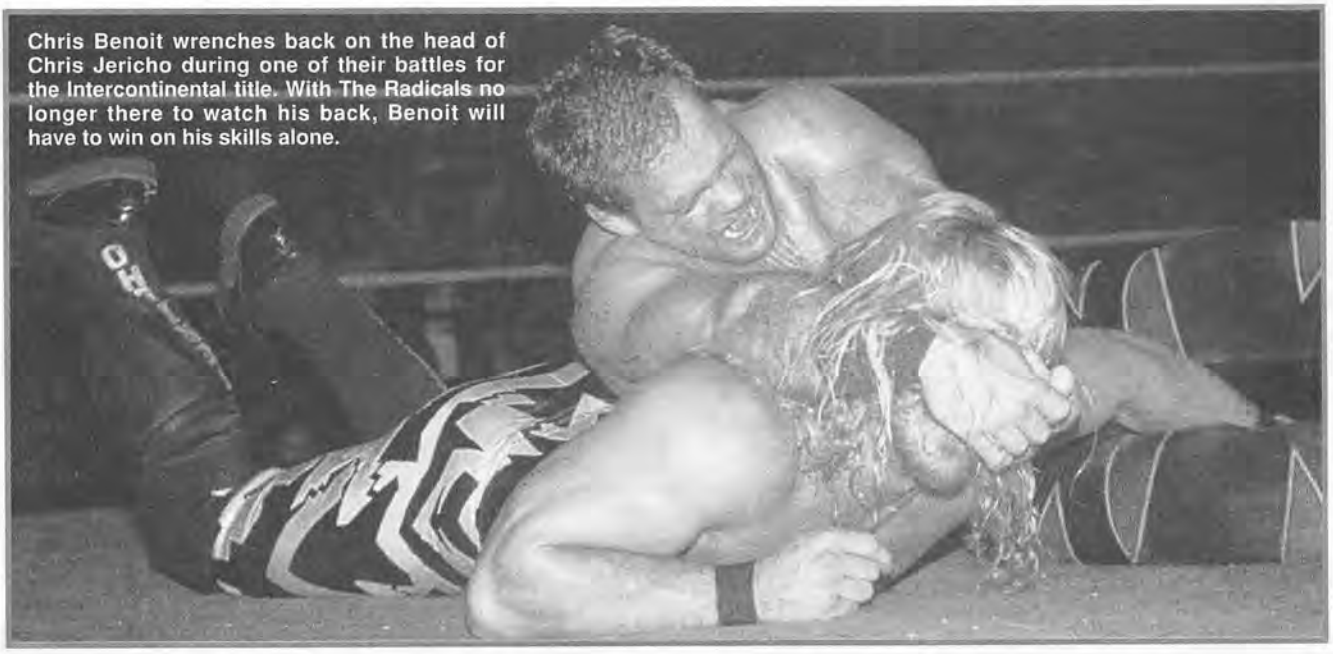
Well, less than four months after their first appearance on *Raw,* The Radicals buckled, and it now appears that all four men are pursuing their own individual goals—and that includes beating each other in singles matches.

"You knew they would split eventually," said **X-Pac**, who, because of his time in WCW, has a history with all four men. "I mean, these guys, even if you look at their careers before they got here, were never really together. Maybe Benoit and Malenko were together to an extent, but they weren't tight like DX. Perry, well, he doesn't know what to do. No change there. Then you have Eddie. He's only out for himself. In fact, he's always been that way. Just look at that **Latino World Order** thing he had going in WCW. That was all about him. It certainly wasn't about helping his Luchadore buddies out."

Looking at the situation, I think it's probably in the best interests of all four that The Radicals terminated their professional relationships. As long as Benoit, Guerrero, Malenko, and Saturn remained a unified group, they would have remained "those four guys from WCW" to WWF fans. The Big Show and Jericho only caught on in the WWF once WWF fans forgot about their WCW pasts and embraced them as WWF superstars. If I'm right, that same kind of exorcism will now take place with The Radicals, and that will only help their careers.

After watching the ridiculousness of **Eric Bischoff** forcing the limp hand of **"Diamond" Dallas Page** to scrawl "DDP" on the divorce papers that **Kimberly** had drawn up, I took a tape of the scene to the law offices of family lawyer **James K. Merriam** in an effort to find out if Page's forced *signature* would make the divorce legal and binding.

"Unless Mr. Page signed a new set of divorce papers at a later date, the Pages will remain married," Merriam told me after he viewed the footage. "From what you just showed me, it is clear that Mr. Page did not sign the divorce papers of his own accord. And the



Chris Benoit wrenches back on the head of Chris Jericho during one of their battles for the Intercontinental title. With The Radicals no longer there to watch his back, Benoit will have to win on his skills alone.

fact that Mr. Bischoff and Mrs. Page would do this on national television, where taped footage of their acts would be broadcast over the public airwaves, shows very little respect for this country's legal system. I wouldn't be surprised to see both Mr. Bischoff and Mrs. Page brought up on any number of charges. The evidence of their actions is there for all to see, and they would definitely be held culpable in court."

While I don't hope to see either Bischoff or Kimberly locked up, they should be chastised for their flagrant disregard for the union of marriage. Much like **Triple-H's** marriage to **Stephanie McMahon**—I'll have to show Merriam footage of that travesty, too—the very public war between DDP and Kimberly only helps to advance the concept that marriage is a throwaway coupling no more consequential than two people casually dating.

No wonder this country's divorce rate is so high.

Speaking of wives and marriages, **The Sandman** continues to be unable to stop **Rhino** from pummeling his wife, **Lori Fullington**.

At the Hardcore Heaven pay-per-view, Rhino's successful defense of the ECW TV title was marred by his abuse of Fullington. First, with Sandman laid out on the rampway, Rhino piledrived Fullington off the ring apron and through a table that was set up on the floor below. Later, as Rhino prepared to spear Fullington through a table, Sandman rushed into the ring to save her, only to have Rhino spear them *both* through the table.

Following the match, Rhino was unapologetic.

"She's the one who stuck her neck in my business, Welsh," he said. "She involved herself in my world, so I involved myself in her world. That's the way I play the game, and if you don't like it, get outta my face."

Eric Bischoff and Kimberly Page sit in with the *Nitro* broadcasting team. Having teamed up (some say in more ways than one), Bischoff and Kim have no problem bragging about how they've made "Diamond" Dallas Page miserable.

Buff Bagwell was suspended from WCW for a period of 30 days after being arrested on May 9 in Springfield, Illinois, for allegedly punching **Darrell Miller**, a 35-year-old WCW production worker, as Miller was carrying carpet from the arena floor following that evening's *Thunder* taping.

According to published reports, Bagwell was engaged in conversation with other wrestlers when Miller, carrying a carpet covered in the blood-like substance **The New Blood** used to douse **Hulk Hogan** during the taping, asked him to step out of his way. Bagwell did not comply. When Miller asked a second time, Bagwell allegedly struck Miller in the neck. A short while later, Bagwell was arrested. He was released later that evening after posting bond, but later charged with battery, a Class A misdemeanor. Bagwell was ordered to appear in court on July 11. If convicted, he could face up to a year in jail.

By the time you read this, former ECW World tag team champion **Lance Storm** should have debuted in WCW. Storm's last match in ECW was at Hardcore Heaven, where he was bested by World heavyweight champion and his former tag team partner and student, **Justin Credible**.

"I am both excited about working with and learning from new people, and, to be honest, a little nervous about surviving in a much bigger and more experienced locker room," Storm said on his official Web site, stormwrestling.com. "I'm sure I will adjust with time. Everyone that I have dealt with thus far in WCW has treated me with a courtesy and professionalism that I can't speak highly enough of. If the rest of my dealings with the company are half as good as my first impressions, I will have a long and pleasant relationship with World Championship Wrestling."

Adding a solid wrestler and class individual like Storm to the roster is a good move for WCW. A quiet leader, Storm should be a good fit. Upon his signing, he immediately became one of WCW's most talented in-ring performers. Perhaps we could anticipate a reunion with **Chris Candido**, with whom Storm held the ECW World tag team title for six months a couple of years back.

Former Olympic gold medalist **Kurt Angle** might be reconsidering his rulebreaker ways, according to

(Continued on page 54)

in focus

By Dave Lenker

NONSENSE!

Right around this time of year, I like to devote this space to questions I have regarding this wonderful business we cover so comprehensively. I call it my annual "Just Wondering" column. I've opted to alter my approach just a bit this year. I'm not going to bother with the subtlety of asking rhetorical questions. I've actually had a few people actually try to answer the questions I've posed in this column in the past. For those few of you who did this, even though I didn't expect it, I appreciated the effort and got some good laughs from what you had to say.

Anyway, back to this year. With so much wrestling to try to follow on TV and in the arenas every week, I've been scratching my head more and more often. Certain things just don't make sense. Such as ...

•**The Sandman's run-ins.** They really aren't run-ins at all. If there was a wrestling dictionary out there, I'm sure it would define run-in as something to the effect of "an act perpetrated by a wrestler not in the ring in which he or she moves quickly to enter the ring to help another wrestler who is being attacked in a cowardly way by an antagonistic wrestler or outnumbered by other wrestlers he considers enemies." When one of The Sandman's friends is in trouble and ECW fans begin calling on him to help, he usually walks toward the ring, pops open a beer or two in the crowd, watches the action for a while, then finally enters. Sometimes he climbs a ladder and watches things from there for a while first. Even more amazing is the fact that his enemies will often stop attacking Sandman's friend or friends as he *slowly* makes his way toward the ring and chugs his beer. This makes even less sense.

•**The WWF's booking.** Okay, the WWF's matchmaking makes sense most of the time, but I know I wasn't the only one thinking "Hell In A Cell" when Triple-H began announcing what the main event of Judgment Day would be. He said it was the kind of match most of the boys in the back were afraid of. I guess in an odd way, it made sense when he said it would be an "Iron Man" match. I'd be afraid to wrestle a 60-minute match in the WWF today, too. Not because I'd be worried about lasting 60 minutes in the ring (though that would be a concern), but because 60 minutes is an awfully long time to hold fans' attention these days. What made the signing of this match more questionable was that this was the third straight WWF pay-per-view in which Triple-H and Rock clashed one-on-one (they were the last two men remaining in the main event of WrestleMania). Rock and Triple-H are great sports entertainers, but 60 minutes? How many moves do they have? Thirty minutes would have made more sense. Booking a fresh main event would have made even *more* sense.

Hold on just a second or two. The Sandman will be ready to complete his run-in just as soon as he finishes this beer and maybe one or two more. Don't worry—he really is concerned about the well-being of his friends.

•**WCW's use of Mike Awesome.** I didn't like the way the whole Awesome-to-WCW deal went down, but I couldn't blame WCW for wanting him. When I first saw him step into an ECW ring, I didn't think much of him. He looked like a bigger version of Jerry Flynn. I didn't have to watch more than one Awesome match in ECW to realize he was something special. I didn't have to watch more than a handful of Awesome matches in WCW to realize he was going to be pretty ordinary there. Why put him in the ring with Kevin Nash so early when all that is going to accomplish is to make Awesome look very *un*imposing? If he could have feasted on a few smaller guys first, his star might not have already started to fade by now. Letting him build a reputation as a monster in WCW would have made perfect sense.

•**Miss Hancock's role.** What is it? Could someone give us a clue about what she's doing with that damn clipboard? Ever notice the response she gets when she comes out? Male fans absolutely love her. They love her even more whenever she starts shedding her clothes, though she usually gets covered up by Terry Taylor or some other member of the WCW crew before she gets very far. Imagine the reaction she could get if she started to manage someone important and started getting involved in matches. You can't honestly tell me Vince Russo came up with an idea for Hugh "Captain Rection" Morrus (I didn't say a *good* idea) but couldn't come up with anything for her. Underusing someone as gorgeous as Miss Hancock makes no sense. What is WCW trying to do, make her the next Torrie Wilson? Don't get me started on the use of *her* again.

•**Ralphus.** He was funny when he was with Chris Jericho, but I don't think this thing he has going with Norman Smiley is going to work. He tried to make us laugh by wearing a T-shirt that said "Say no to ..." on the back and had an arrow pointing downward. Hey, Ralphus, it can only be funny if you don't realize you're showing us crack. That makes sense, doesn't it?

•**The worm.** As visually spectacular as this move is, what purpose does it serve, other than bringing the crowd to its feet. All that setup and the end result is a simple karate chop to the chest by Scotty Too Hotty? Expending so much energy for such an insignificant result doesn't always makes sense.

•**Biased referees who aren't so biased.** I think Triple-H was the first man to realize how easy it can be for a biased guest referee who wants to see one of the participants lose to make that participant lose. As Chris Jericho faced off against Chris Benoit in his third defense of the Intercontinental title on May 8, Hunter, the guest zebra, finally figured out that all he had to do was wait for Benoit to put Y2J in a submission hold. As soon as that happened, Hunter called for the bell. I've seen so many other similar situations in which guest refs like Shane and Vince McMahon have tried to make fast counts on guys they've hated, only to stop when the guy lifted his shoulder at the last possible instant. Why not just count three anyway and award your pal the victory? Does that make too much sense?

Miss Hancock has to be capable of doing more on *Nitro* than looking gorgeous and taking notes on a clipboard for no apparent reason. Why WCW hasn't found a way to use her more prominently is a mystery.

•**Eddie Guerrero's accent.** The man seems to be on just about every WWF card there is these days, but somehow he must be finding time to get away to Mexico or at least some Latino communities here in the U.S., because his Latino accent is getting thicker every week. How is this possible? This one doesn't make much sense, but I sure do enjoy watching him anyway.

(Have a comment or question about "In Focus" or anything else you see in ***PWI?*** *You can contact Dave Lenker via e-mail at pwifocus@aol.com.)* □

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June 1990: Hogan vs. Warrior: Why WrestleMania VI Won't Settle This Feud. Centerfold: Sting. Plus: Nikita Koloff, Cornette-Rock 'n' Rolls, Rhodes-Savage, Anderson-Sawyer, boxers vs. wrestlers.

July 1990: The Maturing Of Lex Luger: The "Total Package" Becomes The People's Choice. Centerfold: Rick Martel. Plus: Skyscrapers, Bobby Heenan, Mr. Saito, referees.

September 1990: The Hulkster's Wrath: 7,000 Miles To Violent Redemption. Centerfold: The Steiners. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Sting, Destruction Crew, Four Horsemen, Curt Hennig.

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November 1990: Sting Wins The NWA World Title! "If This Is A Dream, Don't Wake Me." Centerfold: Road Warriors. Plus: Rude-Warrior, Ric Flair, Funk-Hansen, muscle and power.

February 1991: WrestleMania VII Contest. Centerfold: 1991 calendar. Plus: Sid Vicious, DiBiase-Rhodes, Scott Steiner, Power & Glory, Terry Funk.

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September 1992: Savage vs. Sting: Why It Isn't That Unlikely. Centerfold: Nikita Koloff. Plus: Steiners, Barry Windham, Sid Justice, Hodge & Weston, Shawn Michaels.

October 1992: The Hatred Still Runs Deep: Ultimate Warrior vs. Randy Savage—They'll Settle Up At SummerSlam! Centerfold: Cactus Jack. Plus: Steve Williams, Tom Zenk, WWF title controversy, fire match, Eric Embry.

November 1992: The British Bulldog: Hounding The Hitman. Centerfold: Ultimate Warrior. Plus: Honky Tonk Man, Steiners, Undertaker, Madusa, perfect wrestler.

January 1993: New WWF World Champion Ric Flair: His SummerSlam Plan Works To Perfection. Centerfold: Jeff Jarrett. Plus: Ron Simmons, Kerry Von Erich, Rude-Roberts-Steamboat.

February 1993: No One Can Cut Down Razor Ramon. Centerfold: Curt Hennig. Plus: Jake Roberts, Pillman-Dustin, Ric Flair-Road Warriors, Rick Rude, Snuka-Muraco.

April 1993: The Steiners: Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Wrestling's Most Awesome Tag Team. Centerfold: Barry Windham. Plus: Bob Backlund, Sting-Muta, Hawk & Sasaki, Davey Boy Smith.

May 1993: WrestleMania Without Hulk Hogan? Centerfold: The Undertaker. Plus: Ron Simmons, Cactus Jack, Madusa-Sherri, WCW-New Japan, Ultimate Warrior.

April 1996: WCW World Title Turmoil. Centerfold: The Kid. Plus: Hulk Hogan, Ahmed Johnson, Bob Armstrong, Michaels-Bret, Public Enemy.

May 1996: Un-Natural! The WWF Has Finally Gone Too Far! Centerfold: Public Enemy. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Dreamer-Raven, Dan Severn, Ric Flair, Giant.

July 1996: Is Shawn Michaels Leaving The WWF? Centerfold: Lex Luger. Plus: Goldust, Hulk Hogan, Giant, Ric Flair.

October 1996: Peaking Too Soon: Will The Giant Be Ruined By His Own Success? Centerfold: Goldust. Plus: Big Van Vader, Ric Flair, Bulldog, Lex Luger.

November 1996: Giant-Michaels: The War To End All Wars. Centerfold: Dreamer, Beulah, Kimona. Plus: Sunny, Bret Hart, World Peace Festival, Yoshi Kwan.

Winter 1996 (Special Issue): *PWI* 500. Centerfold: Shawn Michaels.

February 1997: Mr. Perfect: "Shawn Michaels Stole My Life." Centerfold: "Psycho" Sid. Plus: Kroffat & Furnas, Vince McMahon, Randy Savage, New Razor & New Diesel.

April 1997: How Winning The Title Saved Psycho Sid's Sanity. Centerfold: Hulk Hogan. Plus: Rocky Maivia, Jeff Jarrett, Unofficial/Officials, Chris Jericho.

February 1998: Sting vs. Hogan—The Match Of The Century! Centerfold: Hogan vs. Sting fight poster. Plus: 16-page Starrcade preview, Perry Saturn, Dude Love.

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October 1998: Bret Screws Bret, Part II. Centerfold: Hunter Hearst Helmsley. Plus: Jim Ross, Marcus Bagwell, WWF controversy, FBI.

Holiday 1998 (100-Page Special Issue): *PWI* 500. Eighth Annual Special.

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February 1999: The 50 Most Beautiful People In Wrestling! Centerfold: The Nitro Girls.

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November 1999: The Women Of The WWF: There's More To Their Power Than Their Looks. Centerfold: Owen Hart. Plus: Rey Misterio Jr., Roddy Piper, Steiners, Steve Austin.

December 1999: Steve Austin: "CEO This! I'm The Damn Champ!" Centerfold: Rey Misterio Jr. Plus: Randy Savage, Jimmy Hart, WCW youth, Billy Gunn.

Holiday 1999 (100-Page Special Issue): *PWI* 500. Ninth Annual Special.

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February 2000: The Master Manipulator! How Stone-Cold Controls The WWF. Centerfold: Kane. Plus: Paul Heyman, Hogan-Bret-Sting-Luger.

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off the top rope

by Brandi Mankiewicz

If you wish to contribute to Brandi's mailbag, send your letters to:

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Or send e-mail to:
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@yahoo.com

(Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Brandi Mankiewicz herself. They do not necessarily reflect the editorial views of this magazine.)

IT AMAZES ME that the English language can be butchered in so many ways. Every one of you morons needs to brush up on your writing skills. I don't care how old or young you are. Your writing is pathetic. Even though I am paid to go through your drivel and pick out the borderline intelligible letters for print, the money sometimes isn't enough. I'd like to line up each and every one of your English teachers and parents and crack them with my Queenly whip for letting you all get by with such an inadequate grasp of the language.

Since I'm a flogging mood, I'd like to line up a few wrestlers for a whipping as well. The Rock could use a good crack for repeating his monotonous catch-phrases over and over and over and ... well, you get what I mean. Speaking of crack, Pat Patterson should be just plain shot for showing us all his racing stripe on **Raw.** *Not only was his special brand of stink face repulsive, but it was also sophomoric in its delivery.*

Rest assured that I will never be sophomoric or unintelligible, for I am your racing stripe-free champion.

Dear Brandi,

How could the WWF allow the tragedy of Stephanie winning the women's championship (with the help of Tori) from Jackie? Come on! Think about it. Jackie is one of the best female wrestlers in the world. They just couldn't give me the pleasure of seeing someone whip the heck out of Stephanie. Give me two dollars and I will do it. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the fact that she smacked her brother and (of all people) her mother. Back to Jackie—why won't they give her the props that she deserves? First they had Sable beating her, and now it's Tori and Stephanie. Get real! All I have to say is give credit where credit is due.

WANDA FARROW
Norfolk, VA

Dear Wanda,

Jacquelyn is not as dominant as you think. After spending most of her career as the token female talent in Tennessee, she's found herself in the WWF, where she's lost in the WWF's tiny pudding-filled pool of female talent. With chicks like Trish Stratus, Terri, and Tori around, Jackie's value has been reduced to that of a doorstop. Sure, she gets her matches against Lita every so often, but that's about it. She should be happy that Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley is the women's champion. At least the belt is being worn by a high-profile lady about whom the fans care. If Jackie still had the belt, it would never see TV.

Dear Brandi,

I was wondering if you ever even follow arena shows from any of the Big Three, because these shows are really awful. There are no major title changes at arena shows for crowds of up to 4,000 people, unless it's a bingo hall in Philadelphia. When will the WWF and WCW concentrate solely on TV for audiences?

FRANCOIS PERRON
LCBO311795@aol.com

Dear Francois,

I do attend non-televised wrestling cards and usually find them more appealing than TV tapings. What has you confused is that you are conditioned to think that a show is only worthwhile if it has every major star, a big-screened entranceway, pyrotechnics, high-quality lighting, and so many signs that you can't see a damn thing. You're forgetting that the reason you should be there in the first place is to watch the wrestling, not the spectacle that surrounds it. But if you are intent on seeing a non-televised title change, I suggest that you either follow the WWF hardcore champion around for a few days or go to the next wrestling card in Albuquerque, New

Think the WWF women's title means squat now? Well, it would mean even less if Jacquelyn held it. Thank God for Stephanie McMahon-Helmsley!

Mexico. That town has a reputation for being *the* place for wacky, unexpected title changes.

To: Brandi
is Tazz he going to get a wwf World title.

RYAN MARTIN
icp2000_99@yahoo.com

To: Ryan
No.

What filthy, degrading, misogynistic plot is Vince Russo thinking up? Whatever it is, it's sure to tarnish WCW's image as wrestling's squeaky-clean federation.

Dear Brandi,

Actually, I would like to write to the wrestling federations, but I don't know their addresses. I like WCW because it's the only decent federation, though it gets a little carried away with the filthy language and half-dressed women. Still, it's not as bad as the WWF. I think the WWF is a disgrace to wrestling. Wrestling is meant to be a clean sport, and it has become all about filthy language and half-naked women. Women do not belong in wrestling, and I don't care who likes it. It is okay if they want to put on a decent dress and walk the wrestlers down the aisle, but the women have gone overboard. I think it is sick and disgusting to watch women wrestle. Men like it only to look at their boobs and butts hanging out. It is so degrading to womanhood as God meant it to be.

Don't get smart-mouthed with me, young lady. Your answers sound rude and smart-alecky. How did you get that job, anyway?

D. JEAN CARTER
Salina, KS

Dear D.,

If you think WCW is the only decent federation out there, just wait until Vince Russo's sick mind assumes more control over it. It'll be just as disgraceful as the WWF soon, which, by the way, has actually toned down its product in recent months. As for the women in wrestling, they have every right to be there, too, no matter how inconsequential their presence may be. They have every right to compete against each other and to dress with as little clothing as they want. Unfortunately for you and the dozen or so others who actually care about the competitiveness of the sport, wrestling has evolved into sports entertainment.

Oh, and I may be rude, but I'm a realist. Most wrestling fans don't have the ability to formulate a sentence, let alone write a comprehensive letter detailing their opinions. I am here to remind them to pay attention in school, get good grades, go to college, and make something of themselves. That's what I did.

Dear Brandi,

What was the WWF thinking? The fans went nuts every time they came out. The roar of the crowd was deafening. I was there. Why did they take the once-mighty Legion of Doom, give them that crappy storyline, and make them beat up dummies? If the fans wanted, loved, and cheered them, why would they cut them loose?

I think Stev awsten shood come bak sune. Actually, I don't think Steve Austin should do anything of the kind. But I do think some of you readers need a crash course in grammar.

CHRIS BLAKESLEE
chblakeslee@hotmail.com

Dear Chris,

If The Road Warriors had remained as dominant as they were in the mid-1980s, then there would have been a reason to keep them. But instead of tearing apart their opponents before their entrance music had finished, Hawk and Animal lost their edge. They became pathetic versions of their once-great selves. Heck, toward the end of their last WWF tenure, Hawk couldn't even stay sober for their bouts. Trust me, if you keep looking at the world through those rosy-red glasses, you will never know the beauty of the top muscle teams today. If you enjoyed LOD, I suggest sampling a few of The Acolytes' matches. It's about as close as you're going to get to a truly tough team these days.

Letter of the month (taken verbatim from the actual letter to share my torture with you all):

Dear Editor of the wwf, When is Stone Cold going to be able to wrestle, I hope soon. I really miss him. I only seen him at Backlash, I never seen him sence. I hope he wrestles soon. And its cool that The Rock is the wwf champion, cause he is the most electrafying man in sports entertainment. Write back, Bye.....Josh Mcbride

jmcbride@fs.lakers.k12.mi.us

Dear Readers,

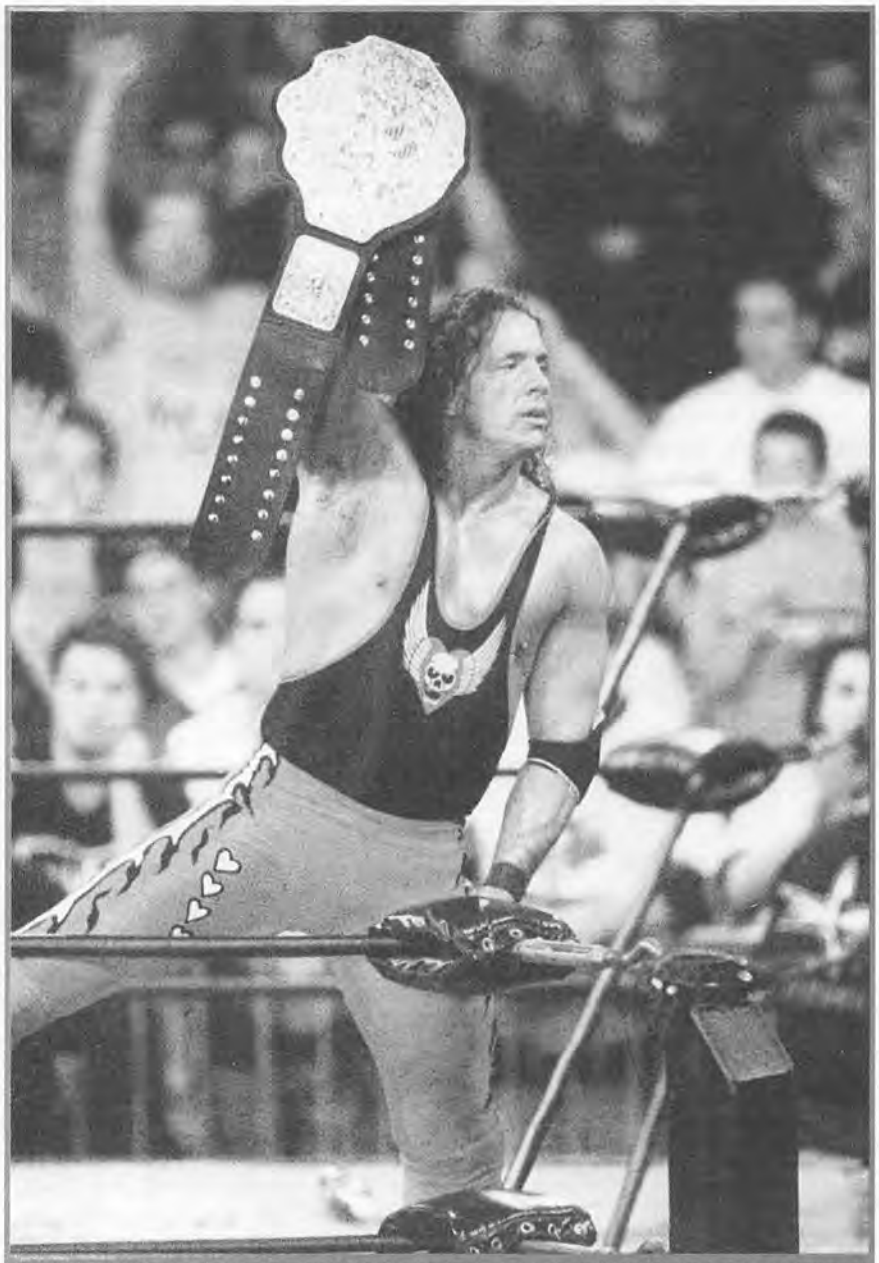
I am not quite sure which is the more disturbing aspect of this letter: the lack of grammar, or the belief that I edit the WWF. Josh, please show this magazine to your English teacher. I left it just the way you sent it for a reason. You should be flunked for not knowing the proper way to write a letter or how to use spell check. □

KREW-CUTS

By Frank Krewda

A Hart act to follow. Well, fans, wrestling's resident cynic, **Bret Hart**, is bellyaching in the press again. It seems the "Hitman" is unhappy with WCW for putting the World title strap around the narrow waist of AT&T pitchman **David Arquette**.

Normally, I'd be the first to dismiss Bret's griping as the bitter ramblings of a fading, jaded wrestling superstar, but this time I think he has a legitimate beef with his employer.



Bret Hart takes things like world title victories very seriously and was outraged when WCW allowed David Arquette to win the belt in late-April.

How would you feel if you were in line for the CEO position at your company, only to see the janitor suddenly handed the job? Well, in Hart's eyes, Arquette is that janitor, and I can't help but agree with Bret's sentiments.

While I've always felt the inclusion of mainstream talent in pro wrestling suggests that the wrestlers are incapable of entertaining the fans themselves, at least WCW brought athletes like **Dennis Rodman** and **Karl Malone** to the ring before. But David Arquette is neither athletic nor successful enough to be handed any world title belt, especially when so many of WCW's *real* wrestlers have been denied their shot for so long.

That's just *my* take.

What has Bret so hot is Arquette's attitude. In a recent interview on Flair420.com, Hart admitted, "I would like to wrestle Arquette in a real match, because I don't think he has any business in a wrestling ring, and I don't think he has any regard for what wrestlers do. I saw him on an interview talking about how he had taken all these falls in a one-day movie shoot and how wrestlers don't take anywhere near that kind of punishment in real life. And I thought, *I would like to spike piledrive him one time*. I don't have any liking for him. I don't have any liking for the concept."

Bret may not be over his concussion yet, but even at 75 percent, he's thinking much more clearly than the folks who decided to put the belt on Arquette.

Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea. Over the last month it has become apparent to me that no storyline, regardless of how compelling, is going to turn WCW's fortunes around. You could have **Rod Serling** writing *Nitro* and *Thunder* and it wouldn't matter. At this point, the disparity between the companies has come down to one thing: depth.

At one time, depth of roster was the one hope to which WCW could cling. Then WCW management alienated seven of its most promising stars. The subsequent defection of this talent to the

WWF has led to the formation of the deepest roster in federation history. It is impossible to overestimate the signing of **X-Pac, Chris Jericho, Chris Benoit, Big Show, Eddie Guerrero, Dean Malenko,** and **Perry Saturn.**

How dramatic has the shift of talent been? Compare the top 10 stars of each company head-to-head, then see if there is any reason to watch *Nitro* after 9:00:

1. **The Rock** vs. David Arquette. A tremendous wrestler who can act vs. a poor actor who can't wrestle.

2. **Triple-H** vs. **Jeff Jarrett**. Jarrett has become one of the most hated characters in the sport. Triple-H has become *the most* hated.

3. Chris Jericho vs. **Dallas Page**. Jericho does things that Page's body won't let him do.

4. Big Show vs. **Big Poppa Pump**. Show is just finding his niche and Steiner knows how to work the crowd. Edge: Steiner, but not for long.

5. **Vince McMahon** vs. **Eric Bischoff**. Fans boo Vince because they hate his character. They boo Bischoff because they hate his guts.

6. Chris Benoit vs. **Sting**. Sting has no charisma anymore. Benoit has less, but his intensity is unparalleled.

7. **Rikishi Phatu** vs. **Ric Flair**. Flair is infinitely better than Rikishi, whose push is based the size of his backside. But Phatu is just one more example of Vince's ability to create superstars.

8. **Kurt Angle** vs. **Billy Kidman**. Angle lost the European and I-C belts, but Kidman lost the shooting star press. Angle is great on the mike. Kidman is terrible.

9. Eddie Guerrero vs. **Vampiro**. Eddie and Vamp's personalities are shining through. Which is fresher, Latino heat or Dracula?

10. **X-Pac** vs. **Lex Luger**. A career overachiever vs. a career underachiever. The difference between WCW and the WWF personified.

Waiting In Vain. Yeah, we know where the ECW World heavyweight title belt is going to wind up, but it was good to see **Paul Heyman** reward **Justin Credible** and **Tommy Dreamer** with title shots at "Cyberslam 2000."

Unfortunately for Tommy, he held the title for only eight minutes before dropping it to Justin. I hope Credible can restore some stability to the title scene after the tumultuous departure of former champion **Mike Awesome**, even though some fans are not convinced that Credible will make a worthy champ. I think these fans are loathe to give Justin credit because they detest his arrogant disposition. The fact is, whether you like him or not, Credible deserved to be elevated.

The following ECW wrestlers also deserve a push:

C.W. Anderson. It's difficult to look like an enforcer with C.W.'s balding pate, paunchy build, and neatly trimmed beard, which might be why no fans take him seriously. In reality, few ECW wrestlers execute maneuvers with more precision and conviction than C.W. does. No reflection on **Bill E. Wiles**, but Anderson should be given a different look and pushed as a singles star.

C.W. Anderson may not look like a killer in the ring, but he is one of ECW's most technically sound and underrated wrestlers.

Little Guido. Tommy Rich and **Tracey Smothers** are long gone, and it's no longer a secret that Guido trained under **Billy Robinson**, one of the sport's foremost submission specialists. A Little Guido-**Rob Van Dam** feud would be interesting. A showdown with Credible wouldn't be farfetched, either.

Roadkill. Even though they question his affection for sheep, the fans are solidly behind Roadkill. Just listen to the pop whenever he scales the ropes for a frog splash. Is he popular enough to put in the ring across from Credible, **Rhino**, or Van Dam? There's only one way to find out.

Buzz cuts. Is it any wonder The Big Show was given **Stevie Richards'** "gimmick infringement" gimmick? His impersonation of **Hulk Hogan** at Backlash was the best I've ever seen. Even Rikishi had trouble keeping a straight face on *Raw* the next night, when Show appeared as "Show-kishi" ... **Dawn Marie** looked impressive in a mixed tag match against **Jazz** and **Nova** on April 22. I stand by what I said here several months ago: She could be more than just a pretty valet in ECW ... For a second straight pay-per-view, **Jim Ross** delivered a substandard performance at Backlash. **Jerry Lawler**, however, may have delivered his best ... A couple of boneheaded moves on the part of ECW's schedule makers: First, scheduling Hardcore Heaven on Mother's Day! I personally know of 10 people who missed the show because of family commitments. Second, scheduling just one appearance at the ECW Arena over the summer months. As we go to press, ECW last appeared at the Arena on April 22. The next show in South Philly is scheduled for July 18. Not cool! □

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2) Send it with $1 for each opponent to: **IWA CHALLENGE**
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This is not a computer game or on-line game. After you prove yourself against these ten guys, you'll face wrestlers created by IWA players from all over the world!

WEAR-DOWN HOLDS

1. Airplane spin
2. Armbar
3. Armdrag
4. Armlock
5. Arm stretch
6. Arm whip
7. Asian spike
8. Bear hug
9. Biting
10. Body slam
11. Body tackle
12. Chicken wing
13. Choke
14. Claw
15. Clothesline
16. Cross body block
17. Double axehandle
18. Drop kick
19. Eagle split
20. Elbow smash
21. Eye gouge
22. Face rake
23. Fireman's carry ram
24. Flying body press
25. Flying clothesline
26. Flying drop kick
27. Flying elbow drop
28. Flying head butt
29. Flying mare
30. Forearm smash
31. Foreign object
32. Full nelson
33. Giant swing
34. Grapevine
35. Hair pulling
36. Hammerlock
37. Head lock
38. Head stomp
39. Heart punch
40. Hip roll
41. Irish whip
42. Knee drop
43. Leglock
44. Manager interference
45. Monkey flip
46. Overhead toss
47. Pole ram
48. Reverse chinlock
49. Rolling scissors
50. Rope burn
51. Savate kick
52. Scissors grip
53. Shoulder breaker
54. Slingshot
55. Snap mare
56. Step-over toe hold
57. Suplex
58. Surfboard
59. Turnbuckle smash
60. Wristlock

SET-UP HOLDS

61. Abdominal stretch
62. Atomic drop
63. Avalanche
64. Backbreaker
65. Backroll press
66. Belly to belly
67. Big splash
68. Boston crab
69. Brain buster
70. Bulldog
71. Camel clutch
72. Cobra clutch
73. Cradle
74. Crucifix
75. DDT
76. Figure four
77. Flying leg drop
78. Gourd buster
79. Indian death lock
80. Neckbreaker
81. Piledriver
82. Power bomb
83. Power slam
84. Russian sickle
85. Sleeper
86. Slingshot suplex
87. Small package
88. Spine buster
89. Sunset flip
90. Superplex

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❑ *1. Big Ben*

❑ *2. Ace Stevens*

❑ *3. Jaeger van Dorn*

❑ *4. Bodybag Jones*

❑ *5. Wildfire Johnny Rage*

YOUR NAME (PRINT NEATLY)

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

WRESTLER'S NAME (DO NOT USE ANY REAL PRO WRESTLER NAMES)

Wear-Down Holds: Choose 10 of the holds at the left numbered 1-60. Only use a hold once.

1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____

6_____ 7_____ 8_____ 9_____ 10_____

Set-Up Holds: Choose 5 of the holds at the left numbered 61-90. Only use a hold once.

1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____

Finishing Hold: Create your own custom final maneuver or choose a hold from our list.

_____

Opponents: Check the box below each wrestler you wish to challenge.

❑ *6. Eric Darkstrom*

❑ *7. Nook the Secret Weapon*

❑ *8. Derek Craven*

❑ *9. El Diablo Sanchez*

❑ *10. Tygar Singh*

RHINO Takes a Slap at RVD!

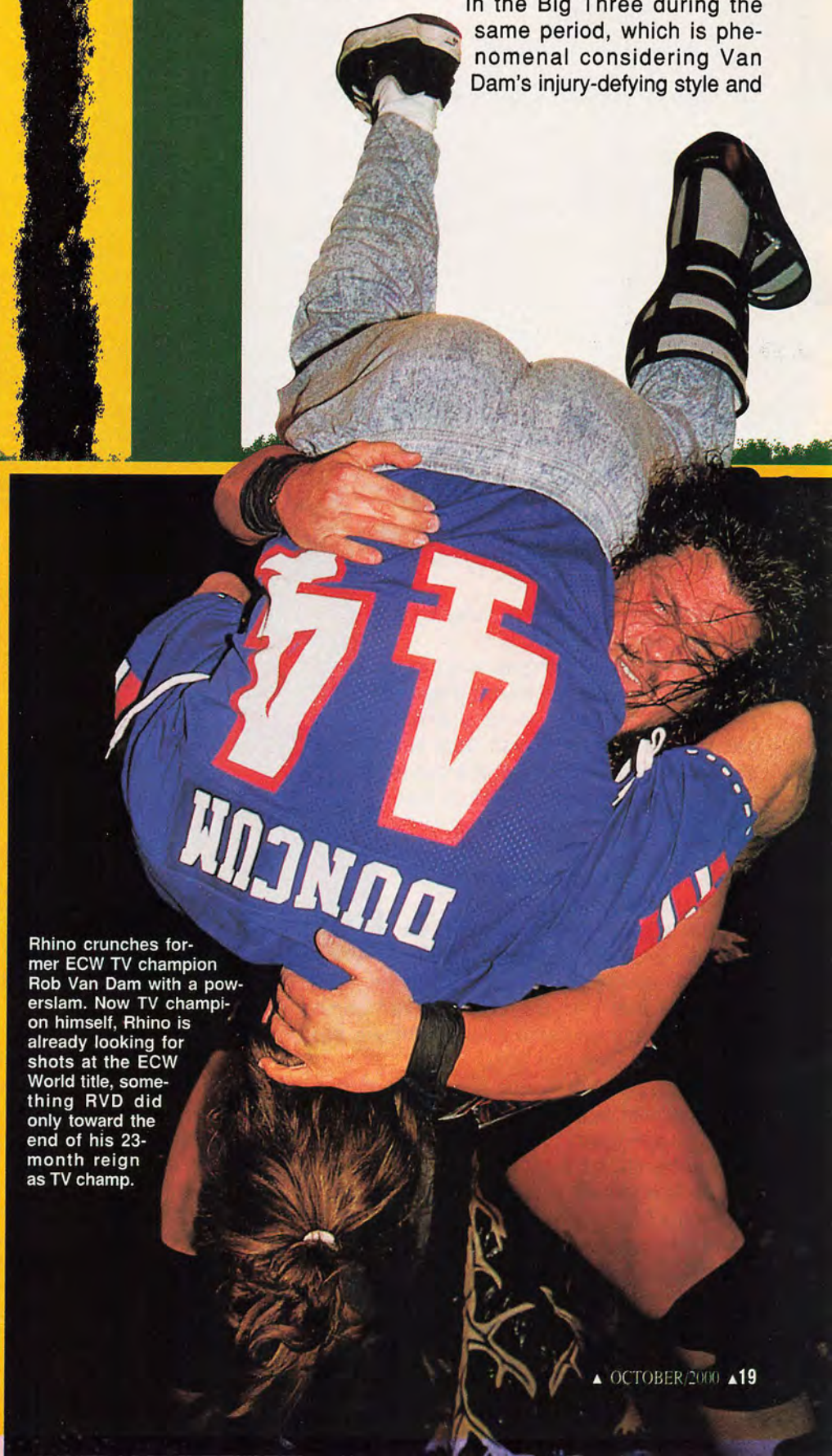
"If I'm TV champ for two years, I'll quit!"

Photos by Frank Vitucci

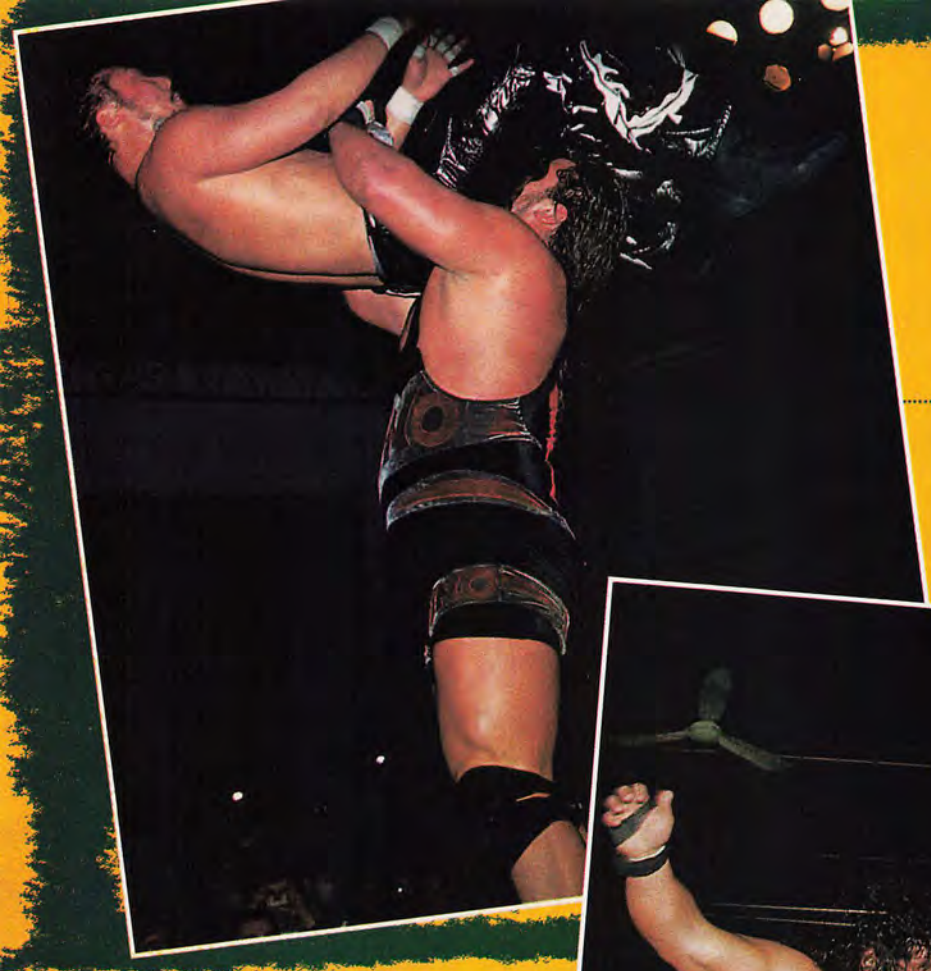
Rhino has only worn the ECW TV title belt for a short time, but he's already talking about securing World title shots. It makes one wonder: Why didn't Rob Van Dam ever do the same?

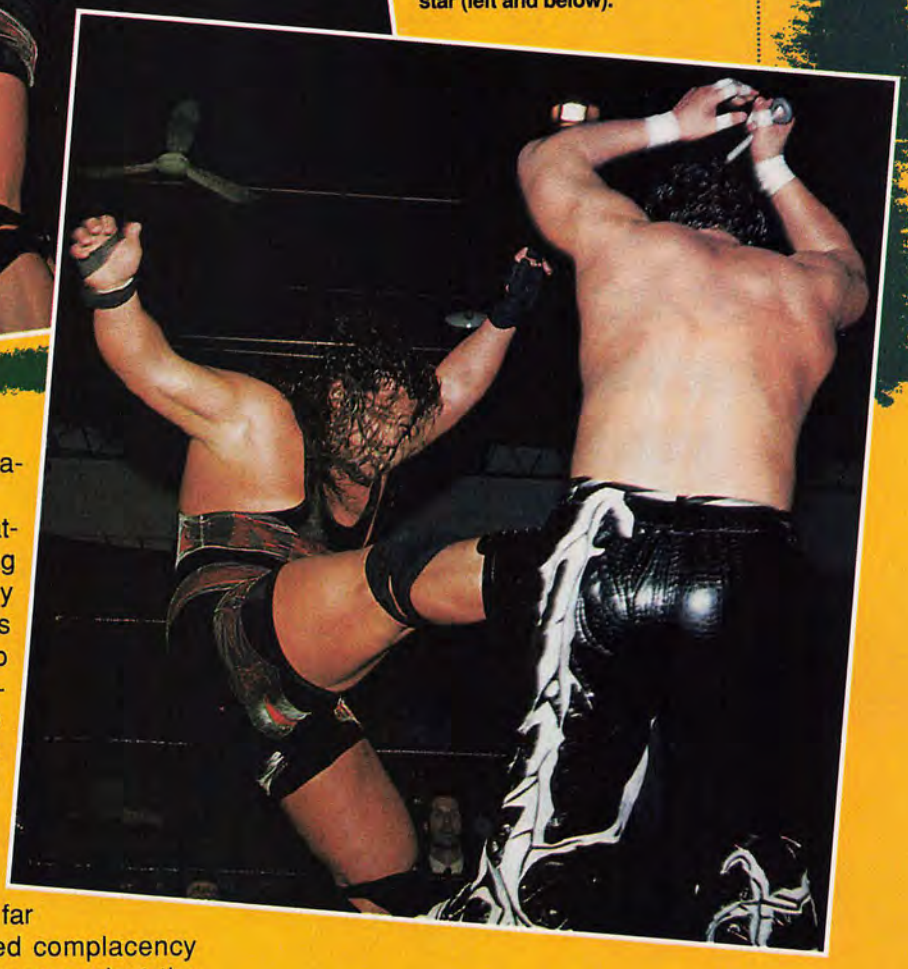
By Dan Murphy

THERE ARE TWO ways of looking at the 23 months Rob Van Dam spent as ECW TV champion. On one hand, the length of RVD's reign eclipsed that of every other singles champion in the Big Three during the same period, which is phenomenal considering Van Dam's injury-defying style and



Rhino crunches former ECW TV champion Rob Van Dam with a powerslam. Now TV champion himself, Rhino is already looking for shots at the ECW World title, something RVD did only toward the end of his 23-month reign as TV champ.





When Rhino captured the TV title from Yoshihiro Tajiri, he had the psychological upper hand—and the physical one, too. Although Tajiri is quicker than Rhino, Rhino beat the heck out of the Japanese star (left and below).

the fact that title-saving disqualifications are extinct in ECW.

But even when one goes to congratulate Van Dam for his record-breaking run as TV champion (a run that only came to an end when Van Dam was stripped of the belt on March 4 due to injury), one nagging question persists: If Rob Van Dam is truly "The Whole F'n Show," how come he never pressed for a shot at the ECW World heavyweight title?

That question has become an asterisk next to Van Dam's name in the ECW record book. Some go so far as to say that Van Dam's perceived complacency diminishes his successful title defenses against the likes of Jerry Lynn and Sabu.

"Sure, Van Dam looked good in beating guys with a style similar to his own, but has the guy ever *really* been challenged?" Steve Corino recently asked. "Would he still be such an arrogant S.O.B. if he had lost a few World title matches to Tazz or Mike Awesome? If you ask me, a secondary title is the best Van Dam can ever hope for in this business. He just doesn't have what it takes to be a world champion."

Harsh words. But the words of the man currently wearing the TV title must sting even worse:

"I have a lot of work to do if I want to elevate this title after Van Dam relegated it to mid-card status for so long," Rhino declared. "Unlike that coward Van Dam, I'm not going to hide from the top guys in ECW. I'll take on whoever has the World title, and I plan on winning the damn thing, too.

"In fact, if I'm TV champ for two years, I'll quit!"

It's odd that Corino and Rhino should accuse RVD of cowardice. After all, on more than one occasion, Van Dam has come to the ring at less than 100 percent and gotten the upper hand on Corino, Rhino, and

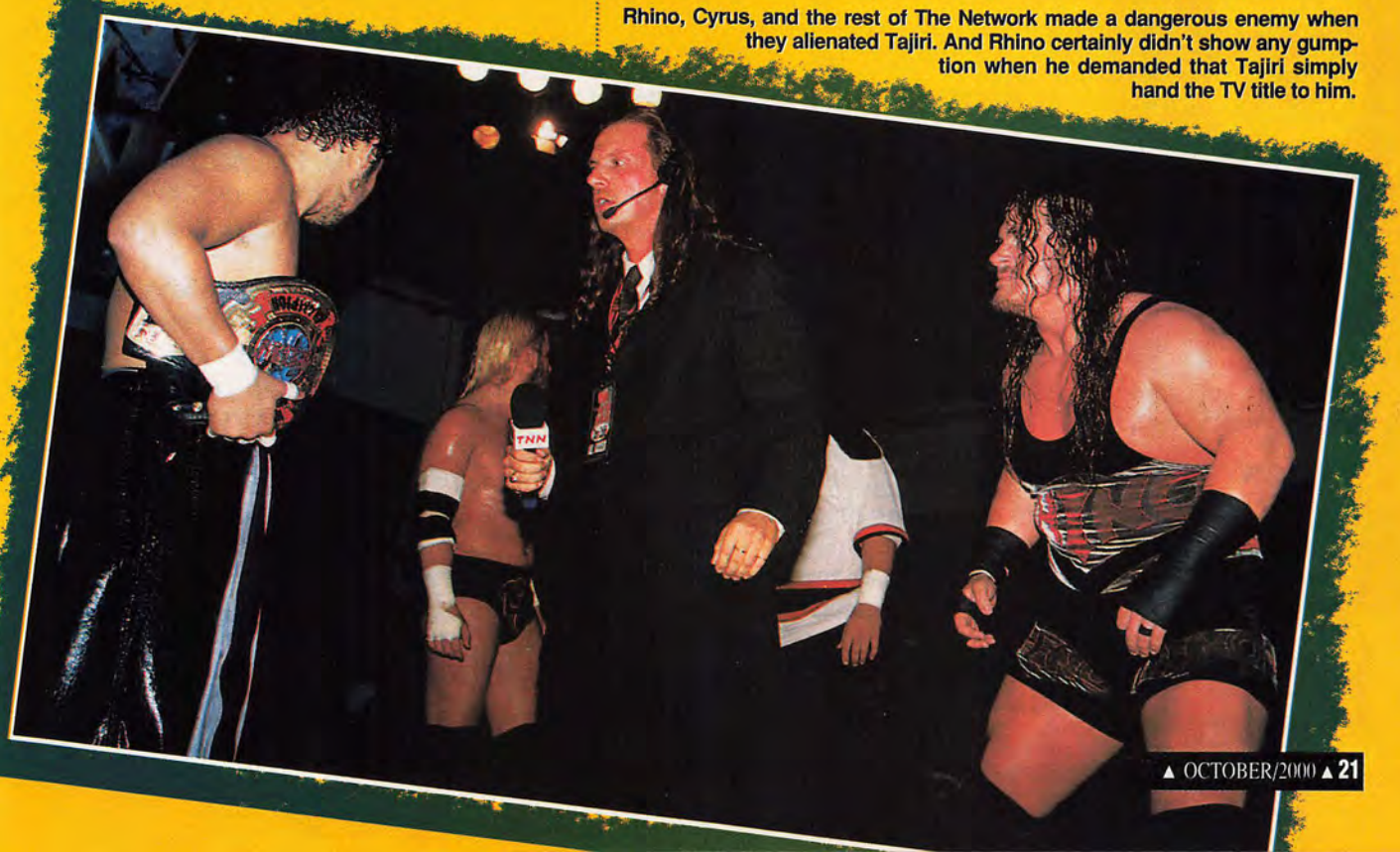
other representatives of The Network. Heck, he even had to be carried to the ring on Scotty Anton's shoulders once, and he was still too much for The Network to handle.

However, Van Dam can be quite sensitive when anyone tries to shortchange his accomplishments. "Mr. PPV" won't stand for anyone belittling his TV title reign or casting aspersions on his character—especially when he's out injured and unable to defend himself. Rhino and Corino know how much their words bother Van Dam, and that's exactly why they've kept it up.

Even when Van Dam was out with a broken foot, he would often climb in the ring and confront Rhino and The Network. Does Rhino have the kind of intestinal fortitude Van Dam displayed while he was injured?

Steve Corino may be annoying, but he didn't come to be known as "The King Of Old School" for nothing. Right now, he and Rhino are using tactics derived from old-school stars like Tully Blanchard and John Tatum: They're insulting Van Dam's record to get him angry. Once Van Dam loses his cool, he's more likely to make mistakes, thereby improving Rhino's chances of

(Continued on page 56)



Rhino, Cyrus, and the rest of The Network made a dangerous enemy when they alienated Tajiri. And Rhino certainly didn't show any gumption when he demanded that Tajiri simply hand the TV title to him.

press conference...

The relationship between Shawn Michaels and Vince McMahon has been both friendly and confrontational over the years. Shawn recently returned to the WWF as its official spokesperson.

Shawn Michaels

ANYONE WHO HAS ever watched Shawn Michaels' ladder match with Razor Ramon from WrestleMania X can understand why his name comes up when fans are asked to list the greatest performers of all-time. Unfortunately, these fans can also see why Shawn stopped wrestling sooner than he should have. Career-ending back surgery was the price Michaels paid for setting such a high standard in the ring.

Yet even in retirement, which Shawn made official in February 1999, Michaels is contributing to the business that made him famous. Physical limitations prevent him from climbing into the ring as a competitor, but he remains involved by training young prospects at the Shawn Michaels Wrestling Academy in San Antonio, Texas.

By the way, wrestling instructor isn't the only hat Michaels is wearing these days: He's also husband to Rebecca Hickenbottom (formerly known as ***Nitro*** *Girl Whisper) and father to Cameron Cade, his five-month-old son. Shawn is thrilled with both roles, even though his celebrity has brought some unwanted attention to his new family.*

Then again, controversy is nothing new to Michaels, who, over the course of 16 spectacular years in the business, occasionally found himself at odds with his co-workers. Shawn offered his take on many of those controversies, as well as his opinion of Vince McMahon, WCW, and other subjects in this exclusive interview with Associate Editor Frank Krewda.

FRANK KREWDA: At what point in your career did people begin to realize that you had a gift for the sport that would separate you from most other wrestlers?

SHAWN MICHAELS: I guess the world and the industry noticed it after the ladder match at WrestleMania X. I'd like to think I had it before that *(laughs)*, but I'm not sure that was necessarily the case. The ladder match with Razor Ramon (Scott Hall) was the match where people said, "I think he can be a main-eventer." Even though I believe Scott to be very talented, I think people gave me credit for being the ring general in that match.

"If I never get the chance to do it again, I'll always know what it was like to main event at Madison Square Garden in front of a sellout crowd, being in the Alamodome in front of 60,000 people. Those are feelings you're only gonna get in the World Wrestling Federation."

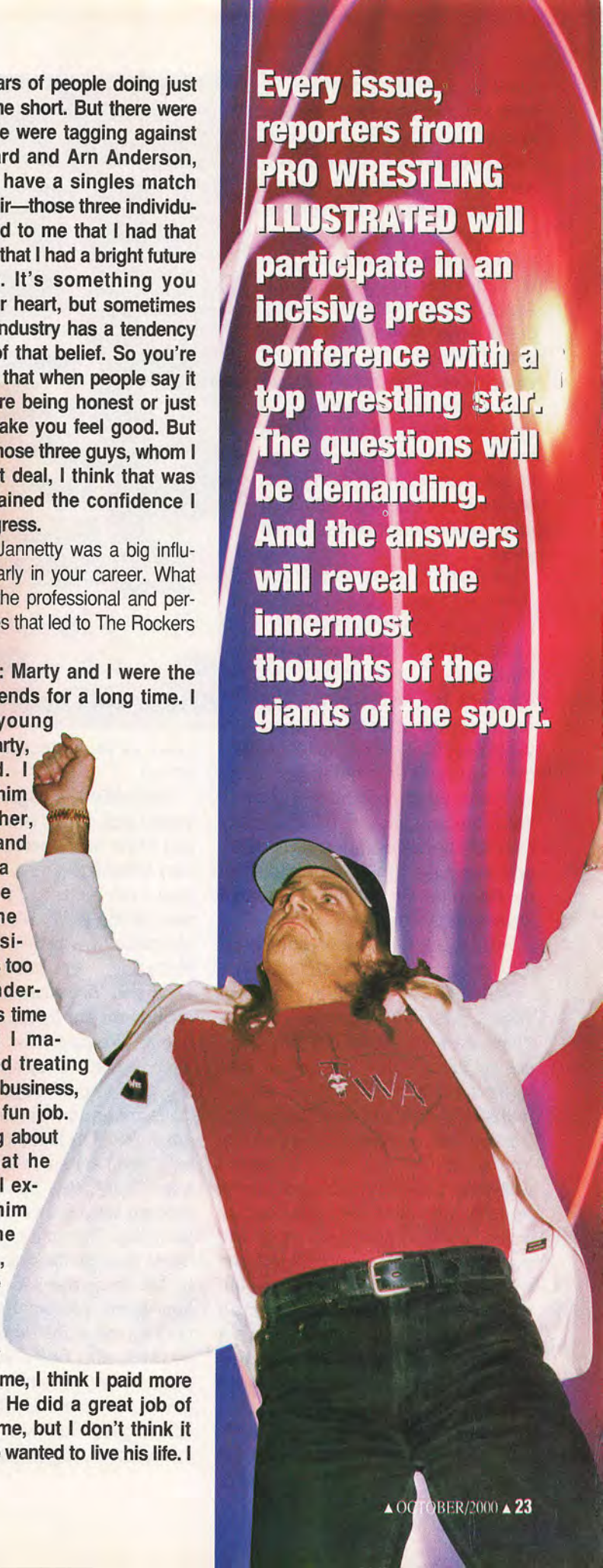
KREWDA: Even during your early success with Marty Jannetty, nobody ever considered you special?

MICHAELS: I had a problem early in my career selling myself short, and it came from years of people doing just that—selling me short. But there were times when we were tagging against Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson, and when I'd have a singles match against Ric Flair—those three individuals commented to me that I had that intangible and that I had a bright future ahead of me. It's something you believe in your heart, but sometimes the wrestling industry has a tendency to drain you of that belief. So you're not really sure that when people say it to you if they're being honest or just saying it to make you feel good. But coming from those three guys, whom I admire a great deal, I think that was when I first gained the confidence I needed to progress.

KREWDA: Jannetty was a big influence on you early in your career. What were some of the professional and personal differences that led to The Rockers splitting up?

MICHAELS: Marty and I were the greatest of friends for a long time. I was very young when I met Marty, 19 years old. I looked up to him as a big brother, so to speak, and he taught me a lot about the reality of the wrestling business that I was too naive to understand. Then, as time went on and I matured, I started treating wrestling as a business, not just some fun job. The great thing about Marty was that he had a youthful exuberance to him that made the business fun, both for me and for him. But then that same reality that he taught me, I think I paid more attention to it. He did a great job of teaching it to me, but I don't think it was the way he wanted to live his life. I

Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.



think he wanted to continue to have fun, and when you're trying to make it to the top, it's kind of hard to do both. Eventually, you have to take it seriously. From a personal standpoint, I think some of the personal differences Marty and I had were blown out of proportion. When he and I got into fights, that was just two young, dumb guys getting into fights over nothing of any importance whatsoever. That was just two young guys who were emotional and very reactive toward one another. That happens when you spend every day with each other, and we spent every day with each other for the better part of seven years.

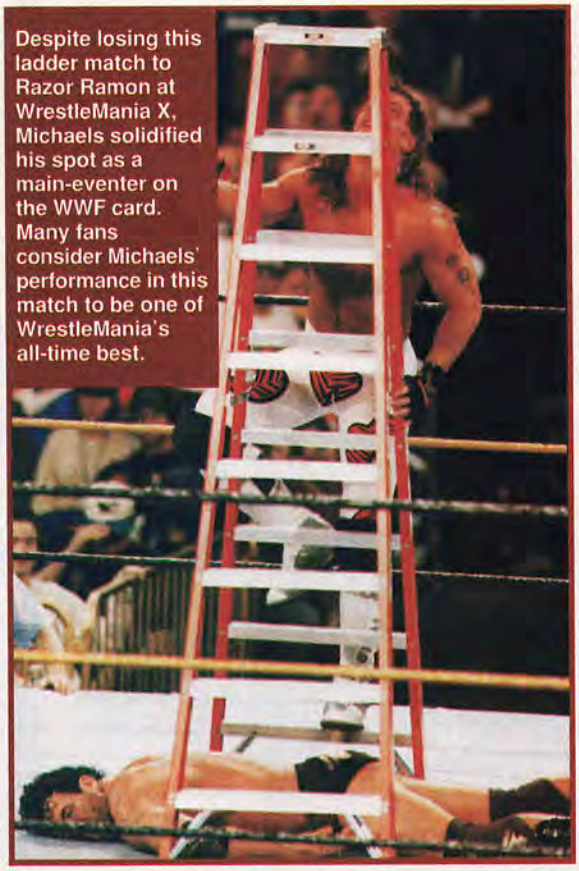
KREWDA: Explain what it was like to be 22 years old and working for the WWF and Vince McMahon.

MICHAELS: Extremely intimidating. I was scared the moment we walked in. I can remember the first day like it was yesterday. Marty and I walked in with this reputation for being two party animals. When we walked into the WWF lunchroom, you could literally hear all the silverware hit the table, and everyone turned and looked at us. By no means did any of the other wrestlers want us there.

KREWDA: Who were your most vocal detractors at the time?

MICHAELS: Actually, the most vocal critics at the time were agents. There were wrestlers, but they don't say anything. If they were vocal, they weren't vocal to us. In the wrestling industry, you could have many enemies and not even know who they are. You could just feel that we weren't well-liked. Chief Jay Strongbow came up to us and confirmed just that. He walked up to us and said, "I don't like you guys, nobody else likes you, and we don't think you should be here, but you're here." Chief, later on, became a real big supporter of ours when he got to know us. But at the time, all anybody had to go on was stories and reputations.

KREWDA: How did your relationship with Vince McMahon change over the years as you approached main-event status?



Despite losing this ladder match to Razor Ramon at WrestleMania X, Michaels solidified his spot as a main-eventer on the WWF card. Many fans consider Michaels' performance in this match to be one of WrestleMania's all-time best.

MICHAELS: It began when I was a young boy, and I was scared of him and never said a word to him. He's a very intimidating man. He's a very big man. I can remember the first time we went to the WWF. We went up to the old office in Greenwich, Connecticut. Marty and I were sitting in the waiting area, and Vince came out and commented on our boots. He said, "Nice boots." We said, "Aw, geez, thanks!" Then he said, "They're made for walking, you know." And we were like, "Oh, my goodness, no, please." He goes, "No, I'm just kidding, come on in." Then he fired us. In hindsight, it's a fabulous story, but at the time, we thought we'd blown our one big opportunity. Then after I went singles, I heard through the grapevine that they had all these plans for me. When you hear them, you want those plans to take shape right away. Six months passed, and not a whole lot happened. I heard I was supposed to get the Intercontinental belt and obviously I didn't get it. So I went to him one day in Landover, Maryland, the first time that it was just me and him. I went in and decided to just be honest—not try to work him or say one thing and mean another. I just went in there and asked him very honestly, "I work very hard. What is it that I need to do?" I was just very abrupt about all the things I wanted to accomplish in my career and how I would do whatever it took to make them happen. I just wanted him to tell me what I had to do. When it was all over, I asked him again, "What do I need to do?" He looked at me and said, "You just did it." That was the beginning of our relationship, and it all stemmed from me being up front with him. I don't know how the other guys talk to him, but from that point on, I began dealing with Vince very openly and very honestly. That also meant when I was upset about something, or didn't like something, or when I disagreed with something. The stories about us getting into fights got blown out of proportion, but we did. Vince and I have been very chummy together; we've hugged and shook hands and kissed each other on the cheek and been the best of buddies, but we've also been chest-to-chest with our fingers in each others's faces, pushing each other back and forth. Vince has commented to me a number of times that he's never had that kind of a relationship with another wrestler. By the same token, I've never had that kind of a relationship with another promoter. I pushed him beyond the limits he would allow anyone else to push him.

KREWDA: It's no secret that Vince prefers his champions to be big physical specimens, yet you are on the small side. What did Vince see in you that convinced him to make you champ? You broke the mold in that regard.

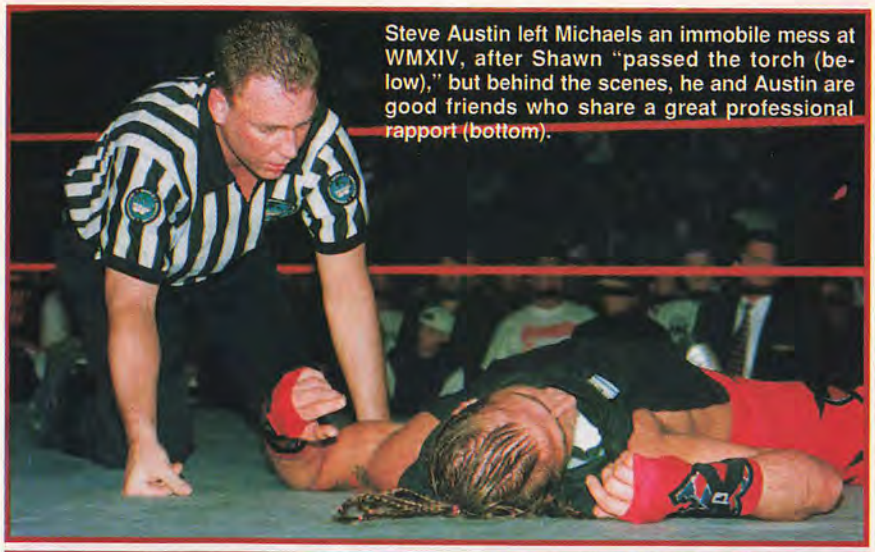
MICHAELS: I don't think Vince ever had any intention of making me a champion. I think that after my performance in that ladder match and the performances I followed up with, the people sort of pushed Vince and the

WWF in that direction. That combined with the person I was behind the scenes with him—very driven, very passionate, very open, and very honest about everything I wanted—and his belief in me made it happen. He was very motivating, very supportive of me at that time, because he was the first one to acknowledge that I had broken a mold. That was a big step for him, because someone like Vince McMahon—or any promoter—doesn't like to admit, "Hey, I wasn't gonna do this, but now I have to because you're making the people demand it of me." But instead of letting any form of ego get in the way, Vince embraced it and was very supportive of me. He knew the type of person I was. He knew that I would do whatever I had to do to make it work, and he believed enough in my performances to know that any doubt someone might have in me would be quickly erased.

KREWDA: Looking back over your career, I'm sure you would agree that some people may have found you difficult to work with. Is that a fair criticism?

MICHAELS: I suppose so. People get in to this business for a lot of different reasons. A lot for money. A lot for fame. I'm not sure how many people got in to it for the same reason I did, and that was to be really, really good. I consider myself the last starving artist in the wrestling business. I mean, I would have continued doing it for no money if the work I was doing was good. The real reason I got involved in the business was to put on performances that other people may not be able to match. In doing that, in being really good and diligent with your craft, you have to take it personally. I think that was something I did more so than anybody else. I was emotionally and personally involved in everything that I did. I wasn't somebody who came into the building and said, "Okay, what am I doing? What have you got for me? What's my storyline?" I was very, very hands-on in everything I did. I was saddled with that reputation because it's not something everybody did.

KREWDA: Of course, when you talk about a man who takes his wrestling career seriously, Bret Hart comes to mind. You guys have had your share of conflicts over the years. What do you think your differences really come down to?



Steve Austin left Michaels an immobile mess at WMXIV, after Shawn "passed the torch (below)," but behind the scenes, he and Austin are good friends who share a great professional rapport (bottom).

MICHAELS: I guess the seriousness I took toward wrestling ended when I left the ring, and I think Bret's continued outside of the ring. I don't know if I'm right or wrong in not taking the business as seriously out of the ring, and I don't know that he's wrong for taking it so seriously. It's a simple case of different strokes for different folks. Personally, Bret and I discussed it backstage that last night at Survivor Series before all the hoopla went down. He and I were, in a sense, pitted against each other. It actually started as an idea of Bret's to say, "Look, let's work everybody. Let's convince everybody that we hate each other." Somewhere down the line, it meshed into real life. We worked ourselves into a shoot, and the people behind the scenes, when the fire died down, poured gasoline on it. I can't speak for Bret, but a lot of it was that Bret really didn't like me. To this day, I still have nothing against Bret. We're just different individuals, and I think that should be okay.

KREWDA: What was the one galvanizing incident where you knew it was no longer a rib or an angle?

MICHAELS: There was a time when we both felt, *This is getting a little out of hand.* We had a long talk and made an agreement. "Okay, we'll stop it." That night we went out on *Raw*, he was in the wheelchair, and he was supposed to browbeat me. Then at the very end of the show, I was supposed to hit him with the kick and we'd go off the air. Well, he brow-

Michaels felt his in-ring rivalry with Bret Hart became too real when he confronted the "Hitman" on May 12, 1997, in Newark, Delaware. When their on-air exchange didn't go as planned, Shawn took it as a personal affront.

beat me until we went off the air. I was told by a bunch of people that he did it on purpose. I just thought in the back of my head that a guy with that much experience shouldn't make such a rookie mistake. I allowed people in the back to work me up, and by that time, things had been so blown out of proportion. I know that I took it to the next level after that. I took that personally. Whether I was right or not for doing that, I don't know. I do know that I took it personally. I think the next week I came back with the "Sunny days" comment *(laughs).*

KREWDA: What was your gut reaction when you realized what happened to Bret at Survivor Series?

MICHAELS: I felt like a Lee Harvey Oswald. I'm the patsy. I may not have pulled the trigger, but I'm the patsy. *Wrestling With Shadows* and this whole scandal wouldn't have been as interesting if people knew everything that went on that day.

KREWDA: Care to shed some light?

MICHAELS: I think everyone in that building knew something was gonna happen, but none of us knew what. Even Bret, when we had a conversation before the match, said, "A lot of guys said I shouldn't let you put a hold on me, and I shouldn't let you do any false finishes." I said, "Hell, I wouldn't do it, either." I remarked that I wouldn't do anything, and we settled it. He and I were really making an effort to bury this. I don't mean to put any heat on the office, but that's the last thing they wanted to happen. Then being asked about it, "Did you know?" Specifically? No. But did I feel something was gonna happen? I sure as hell felt something in my gut, no doubt about it. It was one of those things you talk about quietly in the hotel rooms or in the car, but that you never thought was gonna happen in front of millions of people. That was a huge step, and sometimes I laugh at people who comment on my involvement in it, because something of that magnitude is beyond Shawn Michaels.

KREWDA: Were you satisfied with how you were portrayed in Bret's documentary?

MICHAELS: For what it was supposed to do, yeah. It was a story about Bret Hart. For him to portray himself as the good guy, and for Vince McMahon and Shawn Michaels to be portrayed as the bad guys, yeah, we were portrayed correctly for our characters in that movie. Was it realistic? No, of course not. We're talking about the wrestling business. You can't document anything in the wrestling business and have it be realistic, because you're documenting an unrealistic business.

KREWDA: A couple of years ago, you allegedly threatened to jump to WCW over some type of dispute in the WWF. Was that ever really a serious consideration?

MICHAELS: No. That was just mumbo-jumbo. I couldn't. I was under contract. I couldn't just get up and leave. I know how my contract reads. I would never say that I'd go to WCW when I know very well I can't. That was precipitated by the fact that most of my buddies in the wrestling business had gone down there. Then people hear about me having trouble in the WWF, so right away, they draw the conclusion that I'm gonna go where my buddies went. If in time I'm forced to go there, I guess I would, but I'd prefer to have my career end in the WWF. If I went anywhere, I'd go to ECW, help them progress. I have no urge to be in either one of the two very big organizations. I think I would do my best helping other people.

KREWDA: How was your morale in the mid-'90s, when your friends were in Atlanta and the WWF was struggling a little bit?

MICHAELS: It was down because my friends were leaving and it was down because I was left holding the bag. Everybody left except me and 'Taker, and 'Taker was taking a little time off. So at that time, everybody left, and I was the only mainstay in the WWF. The ratings plummeted, and I got credited with being the low ratings guy. It was tough, but I was encouraged by the house show attendance, my performance levels, and what I've always known—that it

Survivor Series '97 will be remembered as the day Vince McMahon screwed Bret. Though he claims he knew nothing of a conspiracy, Michaels did say that "everybody knew something was going to happen, but nobody knew what."

doesn't matter who's winning in the ratings, because the one who will always come out on top is the WWF simply because it's run by Vince McMahon. He knows more about the wrestling business than anybody and will always come back to being number one.

KREWDA: What advice would you give to WCW wrestlers who might be bummed out by their fortunes right now?

MICHAELS: Go to the WWF as soon as you can. Really. Not just because of ratings. Quite frankly, you'll make more money than you will in WCW. Now more guys get in the business who are more passionate, who want to be successful, who want to experience what it's like to be in the big time or what we call The Show, and that's the WWF. Always has been, always will be. Whether you're winning in the ratings or not, you want to be the main event in Madison Square Garden and you want to wrestle in front of a sellout crowd in Madison Square Garden. That's why guys get in to the business, and if it's not the reason, maybe they are better off languishing in WCW. If you want to be successful in this business for all the right reasons, then go out and get a taste of what it's like to be at the mecca—the most famous building in the world—when it's sold out, working for the most famous wrestling organization in the world, and being the man. That's a feeling you can only get in one place, and once you get it, it's unbelievably satisfying. A lot of guys have to have it time and time again, and I've had it a number of times, and it's great, but for me, that's what made it easy to leave. I was able to have all the things I really desired. So if I never get the chance to do it again, I'll always know what it was like to main event at Madison Square Garden in front of a sellout crowd, being in the Alamodome in front of 60,000 people. Those are feelings you're only gonna get in the World Wrestling Federation.

KREWDA: Your injury coincided with an era of unprecedented popularity for professional wrestling. Does the timing ever cause you to say, "Man, I really missed out"?

Another one of Shawn's lasting contributions to the WWF was the formation of DX (with Chyna and Hunter Hearst Helmsley) in 1997. Regarding the progress Triple-H has made, Shawn says, "He's a guy Vince can count on."

MICHAELS: Actually, I don't. It's not there for me now. I just don't have the passion. Everything I had before, the competitiveness and all that, it's not there. There is a certain amount of joy knowing that I was one of the main guys who made all that possible. Again, that's the starving artist in me *(laughs)*. I get more satisfaction from that. You're talking about material things: being on TV, getting more exposure, more money. That was never my intention when I broke in. So no, I don't miss any of that. I like the fact that I'm not like that. That way I won't become a bitter old-timer. I really like the idea of being the classic movie hero. If you've ever seen the movie *Shane*, he doesn't talk about leaving town. He just gets on his horse and rides off into the sunset. I didn't make some big speech, then come back two weeks later. I didn't do anything. I did what I had to do. I passed the torch to the guy I knew was going to take wrestling to the next level and rode off into the sunset. And I'm very proud to have done that.

KREWDA: A lot was made recently over comments you made regarding the person you passed the torch to and the title defense he made against Triple-H at SummerSlam. Was Steve Austin's reaction to your comments really as negative as the press made them sound?

MICHAELS: Well, it wasn't from Steve, because Steve's smart enough to know that I'm sitting at home doing an interview, acting like a [jerk]. He doesn't care because he knows that's just me being controversial. That's me being "The Heartbreak Kid." That isn't Shawn Hickenbottom. I think a couple of folks in the WWF took it seriously, but they are the kind of people who are so far on the inside that they can't filter through the [crap] and grab a hold of reality. I said something to the effect, "Geez, Steve could at least do what I did, go in and wrestle hurt and do the job." To a guy like Steve, or me, or Hunter, that's funny because they know nobody does what I did. What I did with Steve was not a smart thing. It basically ended my career. I was a good wrestler, but I ain't the smartest guy you'll ever meet. Steve's a much smarter businessman than I am. To somebody like Jim Ross, who'll look at the words in the paper and say, "What the hell is that?" they just don't understand the context in which I'm saying it, but someone like Steve or Hunter does, and that's why I like them so much.

KREWDA: What's your current status with the WWF?

MICHAELS: My current status is I have about a year and two or three months left on my contract.

KREWDA: Incidentally, you must be really impressed with Hunter's progress.

MICHAELS: I'm thrilled. I think he's done a fantastic job, and I knew he would. I knew he'd become just what he is. The main thing about him is he has a good head on his shoulders. Yes, he's a friend, but being objective, he's a very down-to-earth, very balanced young man, and he's a guy Vince can count on. I think he's the

(Continued on page 58)

DOES "STONE-COLD" KNOW HIS ROLE?

No Matter How You Cut It, He Has A Rocky Future!

If Steve Austin returns, his initial target will probably be the McMahon-Helmsley Regime. However, Austin should know his role is intertwined with that of The Rock–and that's why their showdown *must* happen

Photos by Frank Vitucci

It was, indeed, Steve Austin to the rescue at Backlash. He laid out Shane McMahon (right) and Triple-H (below right), among others, and helped The Rock reclaim the WWF title. That probably wasn't the last time Austin and Rock will mix it up in a WWF match.

Photo by Will Welsh

By Harry Burkett

ANYONE CLOSE TO Steve Austin knows he's anxious to get back in the ring. It's been what, eight months, since he has forced anyone to taste a stunner.

A return to action would prove that Austin, against the odds, has triumphed over his serious spinal injuries. And there's nothing "Stone-Cold" likes better than proving his detractors wrong.

For some competitors, any heralded comeback would suffice. Just lacing up the boots again would be a victory. But we all know that won't be good enough for Austin. Assume he's able to wrestle again someday, he will fully intend to claim a fifth WWF World title and become the federation's top man again, in terms of prestige

and drawing power. Austin's rugged determination, along with the enthusiasm surrounding his comeback, might be enough to accomplish that.

Austin faces some overwhelming obstacles in addition to the potential physical limitations. The McMahon-Helmsley Regime will certainly try to humiliate Austin and prevent him from reclaiming the title. The collective diabolical genius of Vince, Shane, and Stephanie McMahon, along with that of Triple-H, is downright frightening.

Those, however, are merely the forces that need to be *subdued*. There's a certain individual who must be *conquered* before Austin can regain the top spot: The Rock.

"The Rock is one tough son of a [gun]. There ain't no doubt about that," admitted Austin. "I can see me and Rock being a helluva team, makin' life a living hell for the McMahons and Triple-H. Then again, I can see the time when me and The Rock look at each other eye-to-eye and say, 'Let's do this thing right here and now.' I respect The Rock, but I'll beat the hell out of anybody who gets in my damn face!"

"Stone-Cold" has dominated his on-again, off-again feud with The Rock so far. If and when they do clash again, Austin will be in for the toughest match of his life.

Facing The Rock at this point would be the greatest challenge of Austin's career. Fans watched "Stone-Cold" embarrass the McMahons, Triple-H, The Undertaker, and Kane for several years. But he has never met a star who is so hot, with so much momentum, and with so much talent.

Austin's past record against The Rock is very impressive. During their feud in late-1997, Austin humiliated The Rock by beating him, deeming him unworthy of a rematch, forfeiting the Intercontinental title, and pursuing the World championship full-time. Austin defeated The Rock for his third WWF title at WrestleMania XV and beat him again at Backlash '99 a month later.

The Rock holds no significant victories over Austin. Yet The Rock provided a more formidable challenge with each match, and his game has improved immensely since his last meeting with "The Rattlesnake" more than a year ago. When Austin's injuries and ring rust are factored into the equation, the result of an Austin-Rock match is too tough to call.

"The Rock vs. 'Stone-Cold' would be the most electrifying match in the history of sports entertainment," said The Rock. "But before that can happen, Vince McMahon and Triple-H must be neutered, and Austin 3:16 might enjoy helping The Rock do that. Destroying the McMahon-Helmsley Regime is a mutual interest. Whether Austin decides to do that is up to him."

If Austin resumes his war against the McMahons and Triple-H, he will no doubt seek the top spot once it's over. Is The Rock prepared for that eventuality?

"Prepared? The Rock is waiting for a rematch with 'Stone-Cold,'" he replied. "It might be SummerSlam. It

might be WrestleMania. It might be Survivor Series 2006. Rock vs. 'Stone-Cold.' 'Stone-Cold' vs. Rock. There's no avoiding it. And it will be for more than the WWF title. It will be for top-dog status. The guy who draws the biggest crowds and kicks the most [butt]. If Austin wants to be the man again, he can't do it without going through The Rock. He knows it."

There is ample evidence that Austin knows it. He helped The Rock beat Triple-H for the WWF World title at Backlash 2000. Was it a selfless act? A sign of his fondness for The Rock?

Don't believe it. Austin, even if he isn't capable of winning the title right now, knows that anointing the champion is the next best thing. It shows he still has the power to influence events. He pulled the same stunt by helping Mankind win his first WWF title and by helping Vince beat Triple-H for the gold. Hulk Hogan helped Randy Savage win the same title a dozen years ago. It's a common tactic of ex-champs who don't want to fade away.

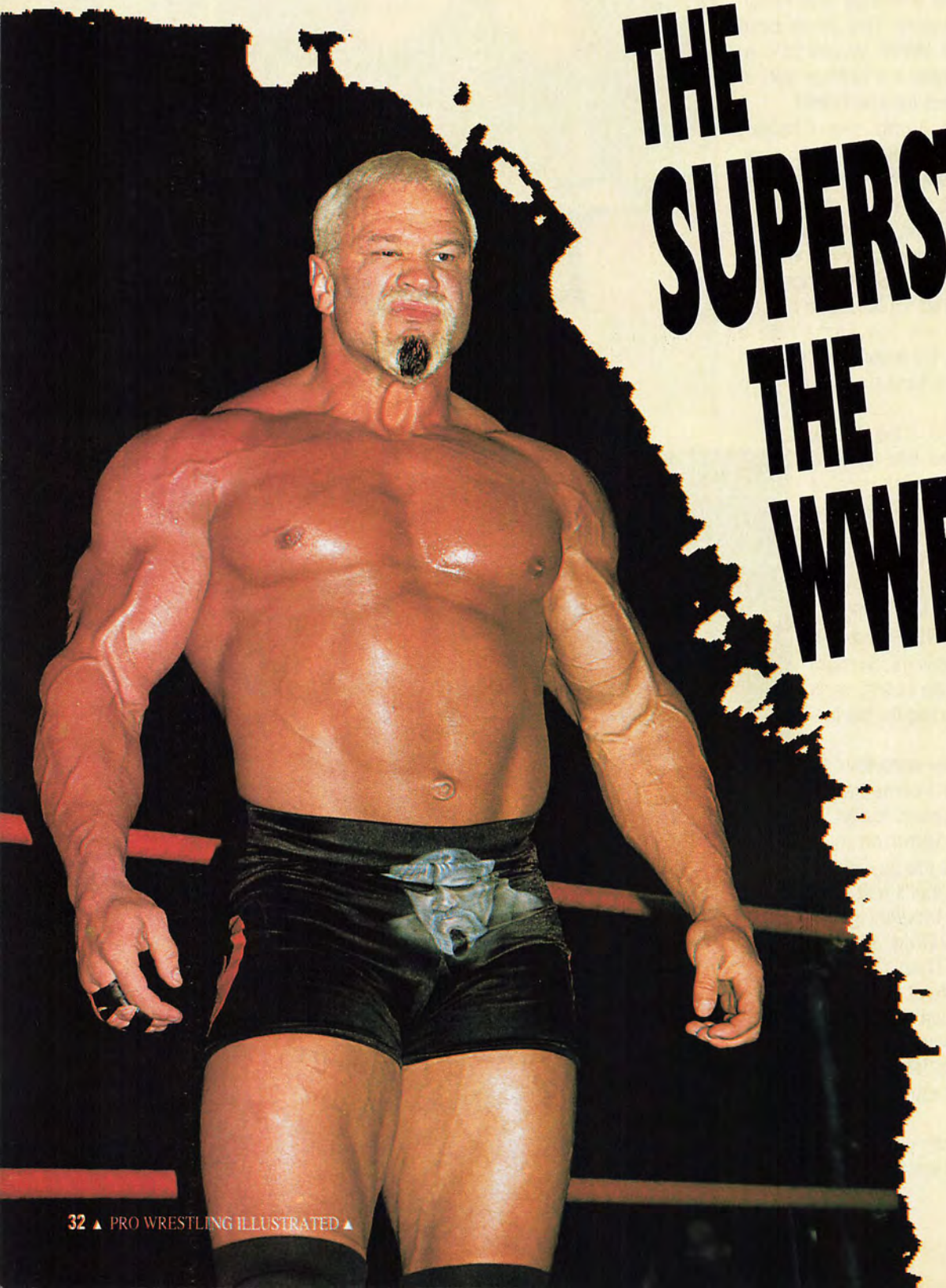
After delivering the people's elbow to Triple-H (left) and pinning him at Backlash, Rock accepted a cold can of beer from Austin (below). Don't count on their relationship remaining quite so friendly once Austin returns full-time.

Austin knew The Rock would regain the title eventually. He might as well receive credit for helping him achieve that goal. Austin understands that as long as he is unable to compete, his role will be a distant second to The Rock, the reigning WWF champion. Austin realizes he must force a showdown with The Rock to regain his former status.

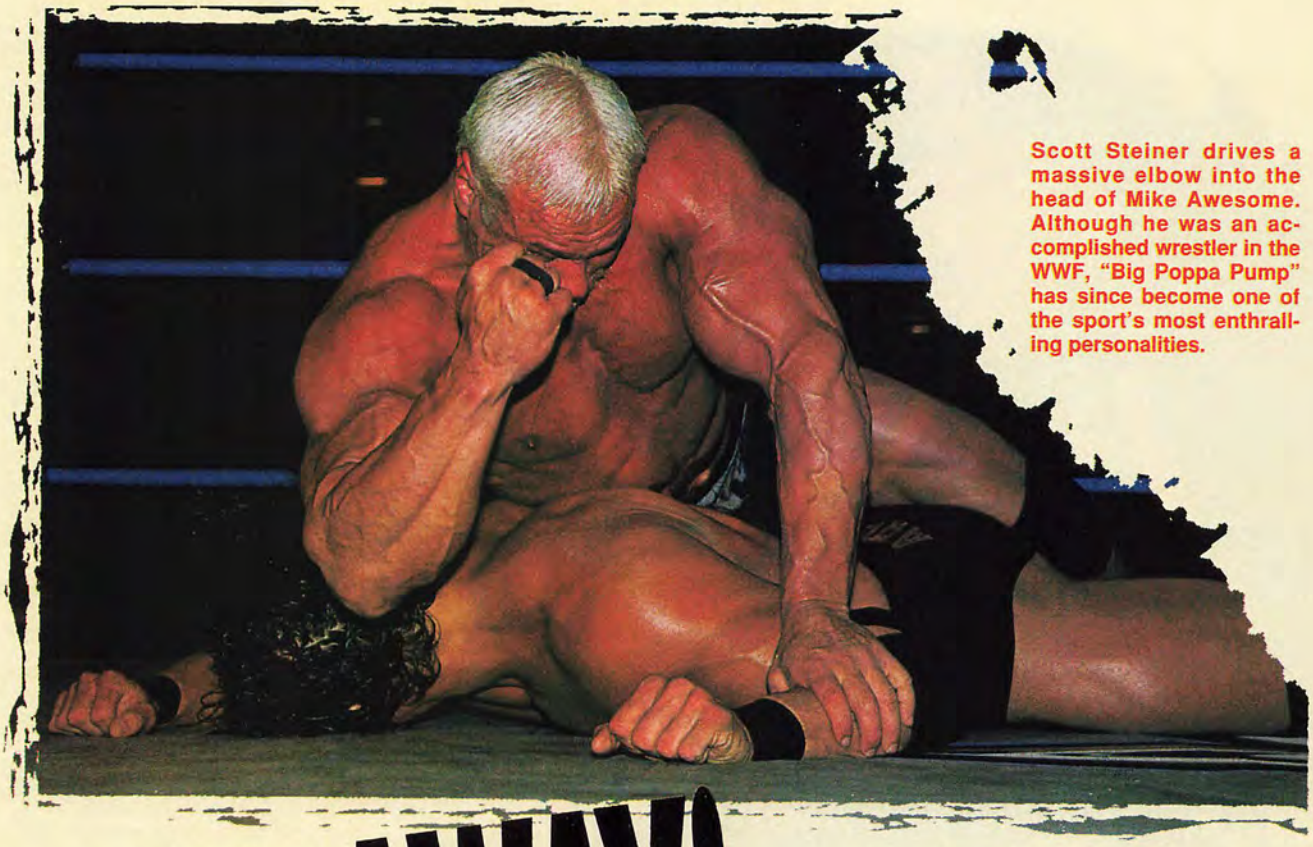
"Do I have somethin' to prove if and when I come back? Hell, yeah!" exclaimed Austin. "I don't live in a damn cave. I know The Rock is the guy who's on top now. But that'll last until people hear the breakin' glass and see 'Stone-Cold' comin' down the ramp. Then I'll prove I'm still the toughest S.O.B. in the WWF by beatin' The Rock. Now Rock can play this straight up and down in a fair match or he can play hardball. I don't really give a damn which way he wants to do it. It's his choice."

If Austin's health permits a comeback, a showdown with The Rock is inevitable. They can't very well ignore each other and go about their own separate business. Austin, with several million dollars in his bank account, has no interest in returning to be second-best. To be World champion and the WWF's top draw, he must defeat The Rock. He can do nothing less. □

SCOTT STEINER:



THE SUPERSTAR THE WWF LET



Scott Steiner drives a massive elbow into the head of Mike Awesome. Although he was an accomplished wrestler in the WWF, "Big Poppa Pump" has since become one of the sport's most enthralling personalities.

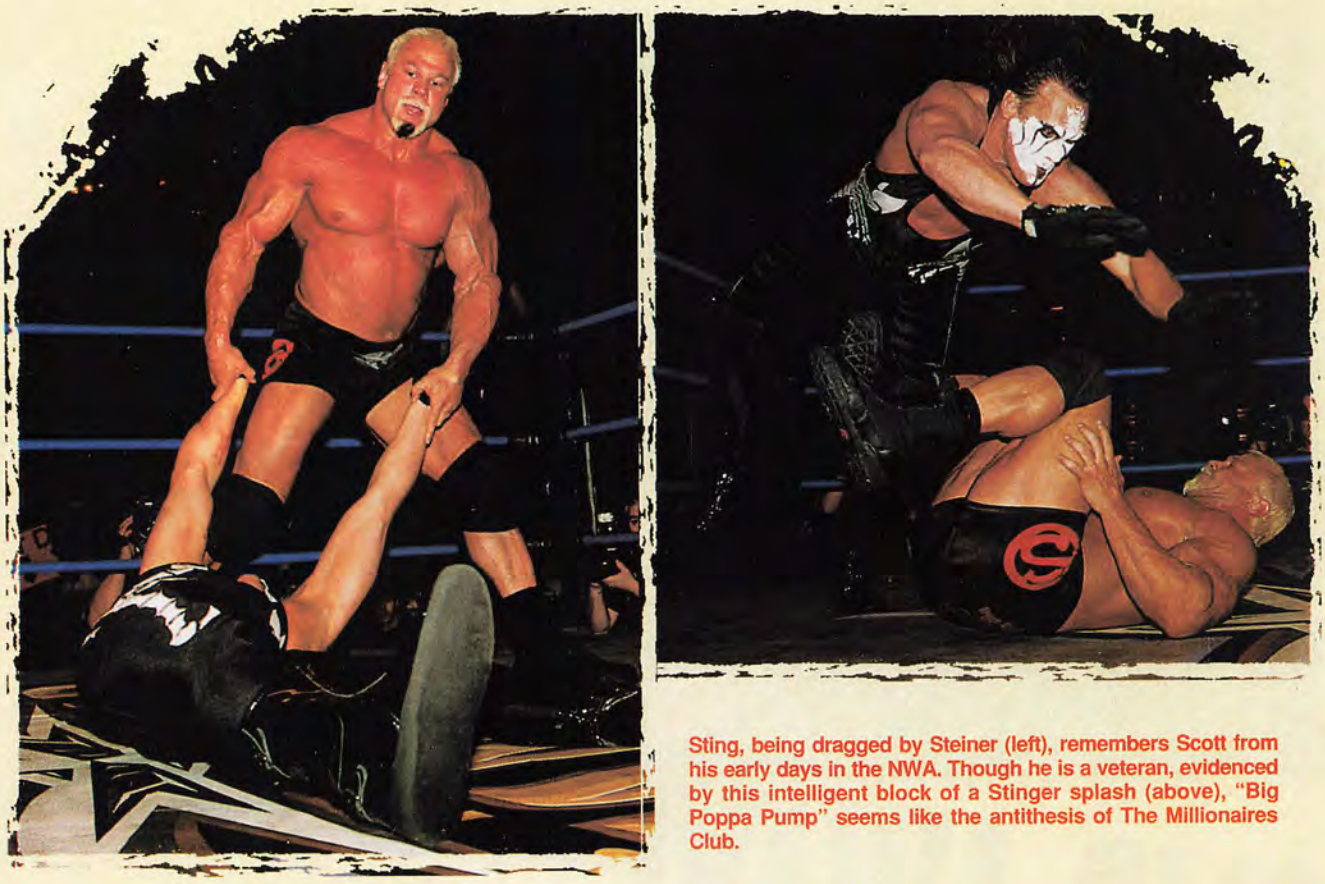
SLIP AWAY!

He has plenty of WWF attitude, but he's wrestling–and talking–in WCW. Vince McMahon used to sign Scott Steiner's checks, but that was before "Big Poppa Pump" became a major superstar

By Dave Rosenbaum

CALL HIM THE one that got away. Losing Hulk Hogan, Randy Savage, Kevin Nash, Scott Hall, Bret Hart, and Ted DiBiase to WCW ... that Vince McMahon could get over, and indeed he has. The WWF has recovered quite nicely from the loss of many of its superstars of the mid-1990s. But it's a guy who not too many people thought about—in fact, a guy whose career seemed to be over just a few months ago—that the WWF would probably most like to have back right now.

After all, as the WWF has proven, it can never have too many colorful, controversial, foul-mouthed muscle men. And they don't come much more colorful, controversial, foul-mouthed, and muscular than Scott



Sting, being dragged by Steiner (left), remembers Scott from his early days in the NWA. Though he is a veteran, evidenced by this intelligent block of a Stinger splash (above), "Big Poppa Pump" seems like the antithesis of The Millionaires Club.

Steiner, the man now known as "Big Poppa Pump."

Now, in due fairness, he belonged to WCW long before he belonged to the WWF. Scott and his brother, Rick Steiner, wrestled in the NWA in the late-'80s, won their first NWA World tag team title in 1989, and didn't jump to McMahonland until 1993. And, also in due fairness, after winning their second WWF World tag team title late in '93, both Steiners were wracked by injuries that could have ended their careers.

"There's no doubt that Scott Steiner has always been a man with a lot of talent," said WWF expert Thomas Pilliard. "He's been successful wherever he's gone. I also know that for a lot of years, the Steiners simply disappeared off the face of the wrestling map, and nobody expected to see them again."

The Steiners, however, resurfaced in WCW in 1996, won four more World tag team titles before splitting at SuperBrawl '98, reunited, then split again in May. Both are major players in WCW, Scott more than Rick. "Big Poppa Pump" is a huge hit with the fans (they either boo him or cheer him, but they never ignore him) and with the ladies, too.

Could there be a better combination for WWF success?

He's a man who loves the spotlight and craves controversy. You might remember that he was suspended by WCW earlier this year after he made some controversial comments about Steve Austin and Ric Flair on *Nitro*.

A recent edition of *Nitro* seemed to be *The Big Poppa Pump Show*. He made no fewer than six TV appearances, doing such things as calling out Vince Russo, challenging Booker, talking about his wild night with Chiquira and Midajah, getting attacked by Tank Abbott, and finally getting into a tete-a-tete with his brother. TV cameras love looking at him. The fans can't get enough of him. Many experts feel he's the man most capable of restoring interest in the WCW World heavyweight title.

"He's not young, but he comes across as being youthful," said WCW expert Donald Wayne. "You look at him and you don't think Hulk Hogan or Ric Flair. He seems to have tapped into what gets today's wrestling audience going. Sure, he curses a lot, and he's always talking about his wild forays with women, but that's only part of it. He's style and image backed with substance. That's what today's wrestling fan is looking for."

One wrestling insider commented that the most important thing in the WWF these days "isn't how you handle your opponents, but rather how you handle the microphone." Well, "Big Poppa Pump" has become a stud on the microphone and doesn't need interviewers to bring out the best in him. He relishes bragging about his inside-the-ring and outside-the-ring accomplishments. His Herculean physique and bleached blond hair makes him hard to ignore when he isn't talking. When he is talking, he's simply irresistible.

(Continued on page 57)

close-up:

RIKISHI PHATU

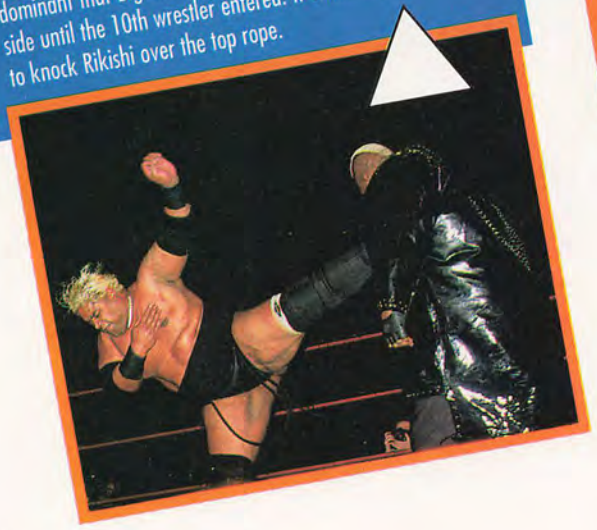
THE 6'1", 421-POUND man we now know as Rikishi Phatu was born Solofa Fatu on October 11, 1966 ... Comes from a family rich in wrestling history. He is the nephew of Afa the Wild Samoan and was trained by Afa and Sika, the legendary Wild Samoans—former WWF World tag team champions—in the mid-1980s ... Made his professional debut in 1986 wrestling with his brother The Tonga Kid as The Islanders ... Wrestled as Tonga Kid Alofa in Montreal in 1987 and as Tonga Kid in New Japan ... He and his cousin Samu beat Invader I and Invader III in a tournament final to win the World Wrestling Council Caribbean tag team title on November 7, 1987 ... Lost the belts on December 12, 1987 ... As The Samoan Swat Team (and under the guidance of Buddy Roberts), they won their first World Class tag team title on August 12, 1988, beating Kevin and Kerry Von Erich ... The SST won a total of three World Class tag team titles in 1988 and were later signed by the NWA ... Were managed by Paul E. Dangerously (Paul Heyman) and feuded with the likes of Rick and Scott Steiner ... Lost to The Midnight Express at Clash of the Champions VII on July 14, 1989, when The Road Warriors interfered ... Lost to The Road Warriors at Clash VIII on September 12, 1989 ... Fatu was ranked number 140 in the inaugural *"PWI* 500" in 1991 ... Fatu and Samu both signed with the WWF in early-1992 and invaded the federation with Afa as their manager ... Changed the name of the team to The Headshrinkers ... Defeated The Beverly Brothers in March 1992 in one of their first WWF matches ... Helped Money Inc.—Ted DiBiase and Irwin R. Schyster—regain the WWF World tag team belts from The Natural Disasters on October 13, 1992 ... The Headshrinkers beat High Energy (Owen Hart and Koko B. Ware) at Survivor Series on November 25, 1992, when Fatu pinned Owen after a splash off the top rope ... Beat The Natural Disasters on December 10, 1992, and moved to number four in the tag team ratings ... Lost to their old rivals Rick and Scott Steiner at WrestleMania IX on April 4, 1993 ... Scored victories over The Smokin' Gunns and the Steiners ... Samu and Fatu teamed with Money Inc. to lose an eight-man tag team match to The Smokin' Gunns and Steiners at King of the Ring '93 ... Beat Men on a Mission throughout the summer of '93 but couldn't upend World tag team champions the Steiners ... Combined with Bam Bam Bigelow to lose a six-man tag team match to The Smokin' Gunns and Tatanka at SummerSlam '93 ... On August 31, 1993, they lost to the Steiners when Rick pinned Fatu. After the match, The Heavenly Bodies attacked the Steiners and stole the tag belts ... At Survivor Series '93, Samu and Fatu teamed with Bam Bam Bigelow and Bastion Booger and lost to a team of four Doinks ... Moved up in the ratings with victories over The Smokin' Gunns in early-'94 ... Got a boost when Capt. Lou Albano, the legendary manager of tag teams, returned to the WWF to advise Samu and Fatu ... Albano got The Headshrinkers a title match against World champions The Quebecers ... Won the WWF World tag team belts from The Quebecers on April 26, 1994, in Burlington, Vermont. Fatu scored the pin on Jacques after a splash from the top rope ... Interference by Lex Luger helped The Headshrinkers successfully defend the belts against Yokozuna and Crush (Brian Adams) at King of the Ring '94. The Headshrinkers looked beaten when Luger confronted Crush, setting off a wild chain of events that ended with Fatu pinning Crush ... Lost the belts to Diesel and Shawn Michaels on August 28, 1994, in a controversial match. Fatu climbed to the top rope and was about to dive onto Diesel, but Michaels knocked him to the mat. After a fierce brawl, Diesel pinned Samu. Samu apparently wasn't the legal man in the ring when he got pinned. "We were ripped off," Albano said ... One night later at SummerSlam '94, The Headshrinkers lost to Bam Bam Bigelow and Irwin R. Schyster by disqualification ... Lost several rematches to Diesel and Michaels ... Samu was temporarily replaced by Sionne (The Barbarian) ... Fatu and Sionne lost to Tatanka and Bigelow in the semifinals of a tournament for the vacant WWF World tag team title. When Tatanka attacked Afa at ringside, Sionne went to help his trainer, and Bigelow rolled him up for the pin ... Once again, got lost in the WWF shuffle ... The Headshrinkers beat The Heavenly Bodies on May 12, 1995, in Providence, Rhode Island, but were ignored when promoters scheduled pay-per-views ... Albano dropped out of the picture ... Lost to Sid Vicious and Tatanka at *Raw* on June 5, 1995 ... Started wrestling on his own and beat King Kong Bundy on August 12, 1995, at Madison Square Garden ... Scored several victories over Rad Radford (Louie Spicolli) and Hakushi ... Beat Hunter Hearst Helmsley in a dark match at In Your House III on September 24, 1995 ... Broke into the top 100 in the 1995 *"PWI* 500" at number 98 ... Lost to Helmsley at In Your House IV on October 22, 1995 ... Failed to make headway in singles competition ... Teamed with Savio Vega, Henry Godwinn, and The Undertaker to beat Helmsley, Jerry Lawler, Dr. Isaac Yankem, and Mabel at the 1995 Survivor Series ... Beat former WWF World champion Bob Backlund on January 8, 1996. After the match, Backlund put Fatu in a crossface chicken wing ... Became a fan favorite as an anti-drug crusader ... Talked about "making a difference" in kids' lives and being a positive role model ... Wrestled for several independent federations throughout 1996 ... Returned to the WWF as The Sultan and was managed by Backlund ... Lost to Intercontinental champion Rocky Maivia (The Rock) at WrestleMania XIII ... Wrestled infrequently through much of 1997 and '98, mostly against lower-level singles competition ... Dropped out of the *"PWI* 500" in 1998 and '99 ... Reformed The Headshrinkers and wrestled for World Xtreme Wrestling ... Briefly returned to the WWF, but was reassigned to Power Pro Wrestling in mid-1999 to sharpen his skills ... Samu and Fatu teamed on the independent circuit ... At that point, Fatu's career appeared to be winding down ... Returned to the WWF in the fall of 1999 with a new gimmick: He changed his name to Rikishi Phatu and started wearing undersized wrestling tights with a skimpy bottom that showed off his large posterior ... Started working his way up in the singles rankings and in the hearts of the fans ... Defeated World champ Triple-H by disqualification on *Smackdown* on January 4, 2000 ... Helmsley was lucky to escape with the belt that night ... His dancing act with Too Cool became one of the hottest hits in wrestling; fans absolutely loved him ... Battled The Rock to a no-contest, then saved The Rock by joining him in a match against Big Show and Triple-H ... Scored several victories over Big Bossman ... Teamed with Kane and beat X-Pac and Road Dogg at WrestleMania XVI in his first WrestleMania appearance since 1997. After the match, Rikishi stuck his butt in Pete Rose's face and gave him what we now call a stink face ... Has since delivered the move to many other hated WWF superstars ... Teamed with Big Show and beat The Dudley Boyz at the Insurrexion pay-per-view on May 6, 2000 ... Beat Pat Patterson, X-Pac, and Road Dogg at *Raw* on May 8, but after the match, Patterson backed *his* butt up into Rikishi's face ... But that only served to make Rikishi even more popular ... His sitdown piledriver has become one of the most feared finishing moves in the sport ... His remarkable comeback from near obscurity has been one of the sport's most compelling stories of the year. □

TAKA
TAFF

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED
RIKISHI PHATU
Dancing His Way To
The WWF Title?

GREATEST MATCH

Royal Rumble, January 23, 2000. Rikishi's goal at this show was to make sure everyone knew he was a major player in the WWF. He was the fifth man to enter the Rumble, and he eliminated the first, second, third, fourth, sixth, seventh, and eighth men to come in, one of which was Viscera. He was so dominant that Big Bossman, the ninth man in, stalled at ringside until the 10th wrestler entered. It ultimately took six men to knock Rikishi over the top rope.

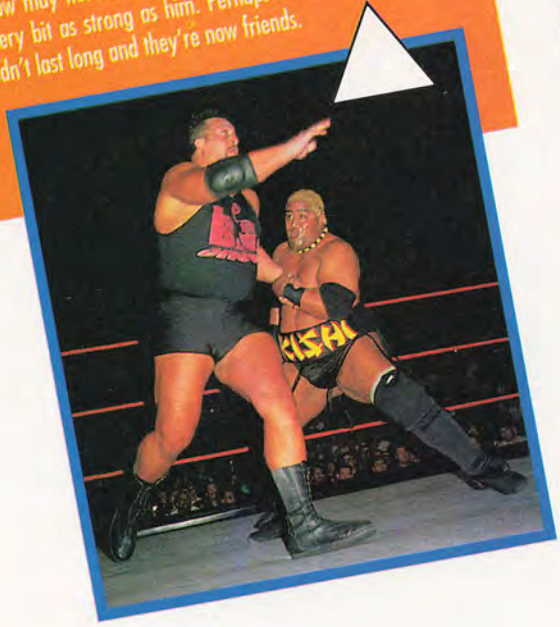


MOST HATED OPPONENT

Triple-H. Take a poll of the WWF's top 10 stars and you'll hear at least half of them name Triple-H as their most hated opponent. The problems between these two started on January 4, when Rikishi nearly ended Triple-H's third WWF title reign one night after it started. Hunter had to smash Phatu with the WWF belt and get himself disqualified to prevent that from happening. During the ensuing weeks, Triple-H orchestrated several cowardly attacks on the big Samoan.

TOUGHEST OPPONENT

The Big Show. This was, well, a tough one. No wrestler in the WWF today gives Rikishi that much trouble, but Show is one man he doesn't outweigh and can't easily overpower. Show may not be able to dance as well as Rikishi, but he's every bit as strong as him. Perhaps it's best that their feud didn't last long and they're now friends.

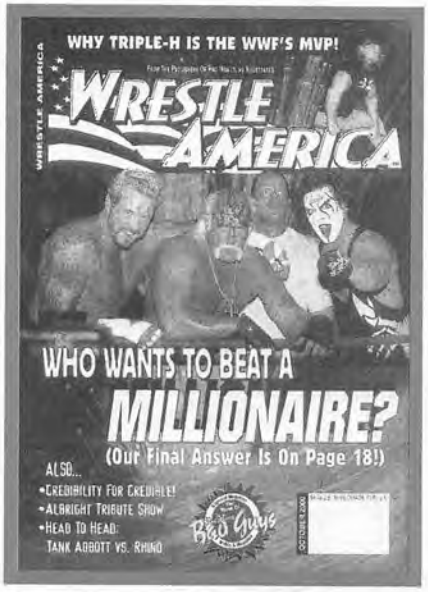


FAVORITE MANEUVER

The stink face. Stop laughing. This really is—seriously—a very effective move for him. It is by no means a finisher, and it doesn't hurt his opponents, but it's so humiliating and disgusting that the recipient of a stink face is usually completely flustered after taking it. If that recipient doesn't simply walk out on the match, he often leaves himself open to one of Rikishi's more athletic moves, like the superkick or seated piledriver.

this month in.....

WRESTLE AMERICA

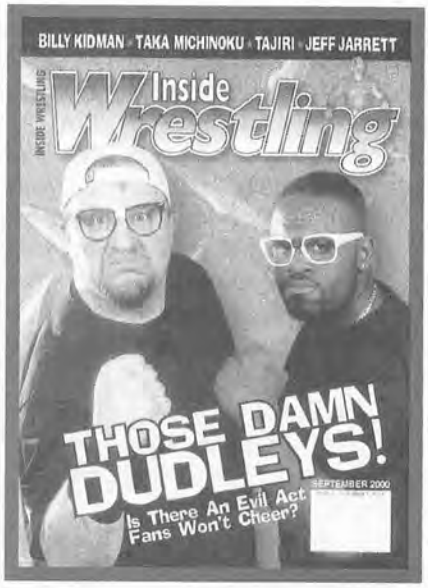


Surely you've seen *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* We want to play a game called *Who Wants To* ***Beat*** *A Millionaire?* Which WCW wrestler is secretly plotting against **THE MILLIONAIRES CLUB**? Could be a member of The Millionaires Club. Could *very* easily be **RIC FLAIR**! ... You love to see **THE ROCK** kick **TRIPLE-H's** butt, don't you? Just about every WWF fan does. But we'll tell you why Triple-H (and not The Rock) is the WWF's MVP! ... Don't miss another edition of *Bad Guys*, featuring our heel-acious midyear report!

All this—and much more!—
in the October 2000 issue of
Wrestle America

NOW ON SALE!

Inside Wrestling


BILLY KIDMAN • TAKA MICHINOKU • TAJIRI • JEFF JARRETT
Inside Wrestling
THOSE DAMN DUDLEYS!
Is There An Evil Act Fans Won't Cheer?
SEPTEMBER 2000

How did those damn **DUDLEYS** become so damn popular in the WWF? We can't figure it out. We do know that the more violent they get and the more helpless victims they assault, the louder the cheers for them get! Is there an evil act the fans won't cheer? ... We'll tell you why **THE NEW BLOOD** is boiling mad at **JEFF JARRETT**! ... **BILLY KIDMAN** explains his hatred of **HULK HOGAN** in great detail in a must-read "Hotseat" ... Do you realize how close **TAKA MICHINOKU** came to becoming WWF champion? He almost bought the title!

All this—and much more!—
in the September 2000 issue of
Inside Wrestling

NOW ON SALE!

WWF vs. WCW THE MONDAY NIGHT WAR

By Harry Burkett

***Bleak forecast for* Nitro ...** Vince Russo and Eric Bischoff proclaimed there were "no magic fixes" to *Nitro's* sagging ratings and Bischoff, specifically, said "nothing short of blowing it up" would suffice. While Russo and Bischoff were downplaying the immediate impact of their return, they had to be hoping that something magical would happen when they "leveled the playing field" on April 10.

It didn't. *Nitro's* numbers have only slightly improved since the removal of Bill Busch, with the program earning an overall rating of 3.0 most weeks.

Russo and Bischoff are honest about the reality they face. Rebuilding WCW will be a week-by-week process. It may not even be a steady improvement each week. But Bischoff and Russo are hoping they can review the numbers six months from now and be thankful for a respectable increase. That's a realistic attitude, but it doesn't change how dire their situation truly is.

As of press time, The Undertaker is slated to return to the WWF. He is a proven draw and there's no doubt his long absence will build interest in his character. No problem. Russo and Bischoff can counter that with Bill Goldberg.

Then what?

Steve Austin will probably return to the WWF this summer and the intrigue surrounding his relationships with The Rock and the McMahon-Helmsley Regime might launch *Raw's* ratings to new heights. Privately, WWF executives are hoping that an Austin-Rock confrontation, if it happens, would draw its first-ever 10.0 rating—and that storyline could be stretched out for months.

How will Russo and Bischoff counter that, considering that *Raw* is doing record numbers without Austin? Imagine how much an Austin return will boost *Raw*, which now scores eights and nines in its highest-rated segments.

Granted, Russo and Bischoff are two of the most energetic and gutsy men in this business. But it will take all their ingenuity to survive the next six months.

ECW vs. TNN ... The feud pitting Rob Van Dam and ECW against Cyrus, the power-drunk representative of The Network, is well-documented, yet the behind-the-scenes war between Paul Heyman and TNN executives may be even more bitter. TNN continues its effort to lure Vince McMahon and the WWF into a Monday night time slot on the network while, according to ECW sources, investing hardly any resources into the wrestling program it currently airs.

ECW is frustrated TNN airs few promos to advertise ECW's program, despite the fact that TNN officials rely heavily on ECW to attract viewers to its "Friday Night Thrill Zone" lineup. ECW officials and wrestlers feel they are exploited for the purpose of boosting ratings for *Motor Madness* and *Rollerjam* while being treated like a second-rate outfit. More promos have aired for *Dead Man's Gun* and *18 Wheels Of Justice* in the last nine weeks than for ECW over the past nine months.

Reportedly, Paul Heyman balked at TNN's suggestion to move the ECW show to Tuesday nights, citing the network's failure to adequately promote the Friday night time slot.

Wrestling in the U.K. ... Wonder how wrestling fares in Great Britain? The WWF, which airs on Sky Sports, is just as popular in that country as in the United States. WrestleMania 2000, which aired at 1 a.m. on a Monday, attracted 190,000 viewers. As our British readers are probably aware, *Raw* is

After a week's absence from the WWF, The Rock returned to *Raw* on May 15 to face Chris Benoit in the night's main event. The Rock had missed the previous week's *Raw* and *Smackdown* because he was filming *The Mummy II*.

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS (Note: Each ratings point represents 750,000 households.)

APRIL 24

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	5.4	6.8	6.6	5.4	8.1	8.0	7.3	7.8	8.6	7.1 (6.3*)
Nitro	3.2	3.7	3.9	3.9	2.9	2.1	2.2	2.5	—	—	—	—	2.7	3.0 (2.4*)

*Head-to-head composite

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: Nitro **made significant gains during its first hour. Obviously, fans are watching *Nitro* to see what boundary they will cross each week. The 3.9 ratings in the two segments before *Raw* should be encouraging for Vince Russo and Eric Bischoff. However, the fans they gained for the first hour left in droves when *Raw* went on the air. Vince McMahon's promo in 9Q, in which he tried to cause discord between The Rock and Steve Austin, reached 8.1. WWF champ Triple-H's tainted victory over The Rock in the overrun did an amazing 8.6.**

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS

MAY 1

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	5.7	7.1	6.7	6.8	7.9	7.9	7.8	8.3	9.1	7.3 (6.6*)
Nitro	2.3	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.4	1.9	2.4	2.5	—	—	—	—	—	2.5 (2.3*)

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: **The washout of the evening occurred in 6Q when Triple-H, DX, and the McMahons took center ring on *Raw*. Vince accused his wife, Linda, of living "a charmed life." Meanwhile, Rey Misterio Jr. and Konnan returned to *Nitro* and became involved in a backstage fight with Kevin Nash. *Raw* beat *Nitro* by 7.1 to 1.9. Incredibly, Shane McMahon was involved in one of the highest-rated quarter-hours ever in his losing effort against newly crowned WWF World champion The Rock.**

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS

MAY 8

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	5.2	6.7	5.7	5.8	5.8	6.3	6.6	6.3	6.9	6.2 (6.0*)
Nitro	2.5	2.7	3.2	3.2	2.9	2.3	2.9	2.7	2.8	—	—	—	3.0	2.8 (2.7*)

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: Raw's **ratings dropped by one point this week but still doubled *Nitro's* numbers. *Raw's* second segment, which has been commandeered by the McMahon-Helmsley Regime in recent weeks, continues to be a huge draw. That segment features strong promos by Vince McMahon and Triple-H and sets the stage for the rest of the program. If only Eric Bischoff and Vince Russo's spots drew so well. Chris Benoit beat Chris Jericho for the Intercontinental title in the overrun and scored a 6.9. So much for those unpopular small guys.**

THE MONDAY NIGHT NUMBERS

MAY 15

	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	5Q	6Q	7Q	8Q	9Q	10Q	11Q	12Q	OR	Composite
Raw	—	—	—	—	5.6	5.8	5.9	6.5	5.6	6.7	6.5	6.0	7.0	6.1 (6.0)*
Nitro	2.8	3.1	3.5	4.1	3.0	2.8	2.9	2.5	—	—	—	—	3.3	3.1 (2.8)*

Tuesday Morning Quarterback: Raw **pummeled *Nitro* again this week, despite Ric Flair's historic victory over Jeff Jarrett for an unprecedented 15th world title. Unfortunately, there was barely a reference to this main event during the first hour, which gave viewers little reason to forego *Raw*. As usual, the WWF countered with a strong program, with The Rock returning from a film shoot in Morocco for *The Mummy II*. After a week's absence from the WWF, The Rock returned to *Raw* on May 15 to face Chris Benoit in the night's main event. The Rock had missed the previous week's *Raw* and *Smackdown* broadcasts because of his movie schedule.**

the highest-rated wrestling program, with almost 400,000 viewers per week. *Smackdown* is second with approximately 275,000 viewers. *WWF Superstars* and *Live Wire* place third and fourth, respectively. *Raw* is the third highest-rated show carried by Sky Sports overall.

In the U.K., both *Thunder* and *Nitro* air on TNT. Believe it or not, *Thunder* is rated higher than *Nitro*, with about 120,000 viewers. *Nitro* draws approximately 110,000. Do they really find Mark Madden that obnoxious?

He didn't look hurt to us ... Bill Goldberg appeared on the syndicated program *Entertainers With Byron Allen* during the weekend of April 23. During the seven-minute interview, host Byron Allen asked the former WCW champ about his football career, his transition to wrestling, and his future in acting. Goldberg's purpose was to hype *Ready To Rumble*, the film produced by WCW.

Goldberg was candid about WCW's problems and said he was anxious to return to action. He didn't rule out going to the WWF someday. Goldberg was more direct about his top priority. "My number-one goal is to propel WCW to the level we should be at," he said. Goldberg didn't predict when his return date would be. □

the steel cage

By Dave Rosenbaum

THIS 'N' THAT. Lots going on, but not enough for an entire column (sounds like the problem WCW faces with *Nitro* every week). We just might be entering another transition period in wrestling, which would be good news for WCW and bad news for the WWF ... unless, of course, the transition means "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin returning full-time to the ring and grabbing the spotlight from The Rock.

Now, before I go on, let me backtrack a bit over what I just said: We just *might* be going through another transition period in wrestling. If history is any indication, the WWF will come out of this just fine, while WCW will be stuck in quicksand once again. I don't think Eric Bischoff and Vince Russo have the creativity to win a war with Vince McMahon when they're already so far behind, but I guess we're about to find out for sure, aren't we?

In the meanwhile ...

Terry Funk: still alive. This is very alarming news. No, of course I don't want Terry Funk dead. I'm talking about "alive" in a wrestling sense, meaning every time I turn on *Nitro* or a WCW pay-per-view, he seems to be there. You know what Terry Funk is? Terry Funk is Pat Patterson in wrestling tights. Terry Funk is a guy who just doesn't know when to hang it up.

Now, I'm not saying that Terry Funk should parade around in single-striped BVDs, because that was just a horrible look, Pat Patterson. It was disgusting, and it almost made me vomit. What I'm saying is, when Funk grabs the microphone and tells Eric Bischoff and Vince Russo that they'll never get the title off his wrinkled butt, I break out in a cold sweat. My wife has to pat me on the head and offer me ice cream. Our ensuing conversation goes something like this:

WIFE: "What's wrong?"

ME: "Funk."

WIFE: "Oh, you mean that old guy with the wrinkled butt?"

No, actually, our conversation goes nothing like that. But put it this way: My wife hates when I start flipping the remote control from station to station, and I do a lot of flipping when Funk comes on. When I see Terry Funk on TV, my first thought is, *From now on, I'm not going to tell anyone that I'm a wrestling writer.*

Let me say this: Terry Funk was one of the greatest wrestlers of all-time.

And Joe DiMaggio was one of the greatest baseball players of all-time.

The WWF without The Rock: a

The indefatigable Terry Funk goes upside The Wall's head and back with a chair. The dermatological properties of Funk's posterior inspire peculiar conversations between Dave Rosenbaum and his wife.

little shaky. I know I'm going back a ways here, but in early-May, the WWF had to have a *Raw Is War* without The Rock, who was off filming *Mummy 2*. Judging by the quality of this show, and the crowd's reaction, unless The Rock is on Mars filming *Mummy 3*, the next time The Rock has to leave for a few days, the WWF should do everything in its power to get him back in time for *Raw*.

I'm not saying the WWF is overly dependent on The Rock but ... the WWF is overly dependent on The Rock.

You should know, however, that this particular *Raw Is War* was held at Nassau Coliseum on Long Island, which has always been one of the deadest buildings in wrestling. It's the place where WCW held its Bunkhouse Stampede fiasco in 1988 (the most memorably forgettable wrestling card in history). Back in the 1970s, when Madison Square Garden was packing 'em in once a month for Bruno Sammartino, the Coliseum was half-empty for similar cards. Yes, the Coliseum is dead.

That said, the WWF without The Rock was dead, too, and seeing Chris Jericho three times on one card (or any wrestler three times on one card) doesn't make up for The Rock's absence. Kind of makes you wonder whether the WWF is doing it with mirrors these days.

By the way, just a question you might want to ponder: Who's better-looking, Elizabeth or Stephanie McMahon? The reason I'm asking is because, unlike most wrestling females, they're both brunettes, and neither dresses slutty (for the most part). My vote goes to Elizabeth because Stephanie keeps making those funny scrunchy faces.

***ECW Hardcore TV:* two matches?** I don't know how in the world ECW gets away with this kind of stuff, but a one-hour edition of *ECW Hardcore TV* I saw the other day featured only two matches. Two matches! The rest of the show was filled with talk and interviews and advertisements for ECW merchandise that you'd only find on people standing outside a tattoo parlor.

When it comes to the prettiest clothes-wearing female in pro wrestling, Liz wins, hands down, according to Rosenbaum. Of course, he thinks her only real competition is Stephanie McMahon.

What's my problem with tattoos? I'm not getting into that.

Instead, I'll get into this: ECW thinks it can attract fans by hitting them over the head with bricks as often as possible. ECW thinks that the louder it shouts, the more we get the point. ECW misses the point entirely. Yes, it's true, on wrestling television these days, matches seem to be less important than interviews and diatribes. That's fine with me. I like interviews and diatribes.

But, you know, whenever I watch an ECW TV show, by the time it's over, I feel as if I've just spent an hour on the phone with a telemarketer.

Let me say this as subtly as possible: I don't want a Sandman T-shirt! I don't want a Tommy Dreamer T-shirt! And don't these things come in any color besides black?!

Okay, I'm done. □

win lose or draw

By Harry Burkett

I'LL NEVER FORGET that famous declaration when the Powers-That-Be, Vince Russo and Ed Ferrara, took control of their first *Nitro* last October. Tony Schiavone turned to Bobby Heenan and shouted, "WCW is fun again!"

I really took that four-word sentence as a proclamation: "We admit the past year has been boring, but we promise to deliver if you give us a second chance."

For a while, that was true. The Powers-That-Be were an intriguing new force, and Russo's acidic wit from behind the desk was amusing. Forcing Hacksaw Duggan to become a janitor and Roddy Piper to become a referee was tyranny at its worst, but you couldn't say it was boring.

Since Russo's return to WCW with Eric Bischoff, that dry humor has been missing. During the PTB run, WCW wasn't afraid to make fun of itself. Russo telling Larry Zbyszko that *Thunder* sucked was hilarious. The image of Piper babbling to himself while trying in vain to smash a television with a bat was one of those moments that couldn't be recreated if someone tried. When Mike Jones/Virgil/Vincent/Vince/Curly Bill announced his new name would be "Shane" (as in McMahon), that was WCW's way of admitting how inept it had been at developing his character.

For all those nights I yawned through *Thunder* and groaned at Mike Jones' latest gimmick, Russo and the PTB somehow made it worthwhile by giving me a chance to laugh at those trying times.

Not now. There are few lighthearted moments on *Nitro* or *Thunder*. The WCW product is dark, violent, and mean. Scott Steiner and Shane Douglas yelling obscenities at a legendary figure like Ric Flair is not fun. Billy Kidman crying about not getting a push is not fun. Hulk Hogan wearing vests that read F.U.N.B. is not fun. Vampiro dumping red liquid all over Sting is not fun. Mike Awesome throwing Chris Kanyon from a three-tier steel cage is not fun. Kimberly pouring what we are to assume is urine in Dallas Page's face is not fun. Russo leading Elizabeth around by a tether rope is not fun.

Watching *The World's Deadliest Car Crashes* on Fox causes me less stress than two hours of *Nitro* or *Thunder*. Some of us take the sport more seriously than others, but for the most part, wrestling is escapism for everybody.

I don't care to hear about Steiner, Douglas, or Kidman being held down. Nothing about that entertains me. Learning details of Dallas and Kimberly Page's marital problems do not enhance my life in any way. I spent most of my life enjoying Ric Flair.

Hey, it's Virgil/Vincent/Vince/Curly Bill/Shane/Mike Jones. Even during the worst of times, characters like Jones often provided comic relief for fans of WCW. Harry Burkett says the company lacks even that much these days.

Why do I want to see him treated like garbage? And I certainly don't enjoy seeing Chris Kanyon paralyzed in intensive care. Our sport has suffered too many tragedies for "sports entertainment" of that variety.

Want further proof? Count the bodies laid out on *Nitro* compared to *Raw*. Dallas Page, Ric Flair, Lex Luger, and Sting were all left laying on the May 8 *Nitro*. Not one person needed to be assisted from the ring on that night's *Raw*. The WWF offered some weird matches, including Gerald Brisco vs. The Dudley Boyz and Pat Patterson vs. Rikishi. There was some raunchy humor as a result, but at least no one got hurt. Dark moments on *Raw* are fewer in number. The Rock being split open during a DX attack and the Dudleys putting Terri through a table are the only two I can remember off hand. I'm sure there have been more, but I'm willing to bet twice as many stretchers have been used on *Nitro*.

I measure my enjoyment of a program, unless it's a serious drama, by how many times I laugh. I rarely laugh at *Nitro*. "Screamin'" Norman Smiley and Sid Vicious (although I don't think he's trying to be funny) are notable exceptions. Just about all WWF stars are either comical by nature or the victim of comedic circumstances. If you've laughed at Steve Blackman, you'll realize I'm correct. Now I don't want wrestling shows to be two-hour laugh riots. There must be some seriousness to make the humorous situations that more poignant. That's why Woody Allen will always be funnier than Adam Sandler and why a flip remark by The Rock is funnier than all of David Arquette's lame 1-800 jokes put together.

Contrast two situations that occurred on May 1 during *Raw* and *Nitro*, respectively. Vince McMahon was livid because referee Earl Hebner helped The Rock defeat Triple-H for the WWF World title at Backlash the previous night. He berated Hebner for not being loyal to him. The camera closed in on McMahon's disdainful expression, bottom lip protruding, eyes full of anger. "Who the hell do you think you are?!" McMahon asked in a menacing tone. Hebner's face was as red as his hair, and sweat rolled down his cheeks. McMahon called Hebner "a little man" in his most evil voice, with nostrils flaring.

McMahon's over-the-top persona helps that come across as entertaining. Since there is no one in our lives as evil and controlling as McMahon (let's hope not, anyway), we don't see it as obnoxious. We feel sorry for Earl, but we can't help but laugh at him at the same time.

That same evening, Vince Russo had another verbal joust with Ric Flair. As expected, Flair talked about tradition and lambasted Russo in typical "jet-flyin' son of a gun" fashion. Russo, waving a bat in his hand, yelled back at Flair in his slightly whiny New *Yawk* voice. Nothing against New Yorkers, but Russo is one of the guys giving you a bad reputation. He

Norman Smiley's big wiggle dance may be an unlikely savior for WCW, says Burkett. If *Nitro* and *Thunder* can't be compelling, at least they should be funny. The big wiggle is certainly that.

screamed obscenities at Flair and said he would kick his butt. There was nothing dramatic or over the top about his delivery. He just sounded like a New Jerker screaming from the subway.

There was nothing humorous or clever about the segment. The tirade was disrespectful and humiliating to Flair. It's more fun to hear Kurt Angle talk about the three "I's" than hear a creative director cursing one of the all-time greats.

My advice to WCW? Lighten up! The fact that Billy Kidman hasn't received a push is not my problem. The next time Russo goes on a cursing tirade, someone should run into the ring and depants him. Somebody should shave Bischoff's head again. If WCW can get fans to laugh at its shows, maybe we won't laugh at their Nielsen ratings anymore. □

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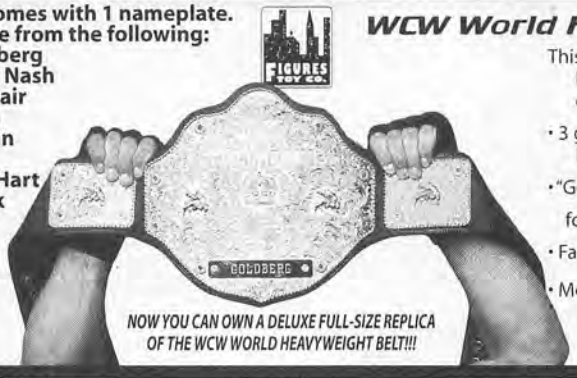

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Stone Cold Steve Austin	25.00	Goldust	35.00
Kane with Hair	35.00	Undertaker	35.00
Kane Plastic Face Mask Only	8.00	Mankind	35.00
Bret "Hitman" Hart	20.00	Rock	25.00
Shawn Michaels	35.00	Vince McMahon	25.00
Psycho Sid	15.00	Sable	35.00

THEATER IN A SQUARED CIRCLE
450 page book
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"EVERY MAN HAS HIS PRICE"
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PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING TRIVIA BOOK
"500 TRIVIA QUESTIONS"
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WWF INTERCONTINENTAL BELT
This is a championship belt that has gold ridid plastic with soft belt strap. (1999)
$19.00 each One Size Fits All

WWF CHAMPIONSHIP BELT
This is a championship belt that has gold ridid plastic with soft belt strap (1999)
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WWF Stone Cold Skull Belt by Jakks (1999)

This is a championship belt that is kid sized.
$15.00 each

Also Available:
The Rock Belt
Undertaker Belt
$15.00 each

WWF CHAMPIONSHIP BELT by Jakks (1998)

This is a championship belt that is kid sized.
$15.00 each

Mexican Wrestling Masks $40.00 each

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REY MYSTERIO	THUNDER LIGER
MIL MASCARAS	LA PARKA
JUVENTUD GUERRERA	LIZMARK, JR.
ULTIMO DRAGON	SUPER CALO
KONNAN	PSYCHOSIS
PATRIOT	& MORE

ECW T-SHIRTS $20.00 EACH

Adult Sizes Only: Medium, Large, X-Large & XXLarge

CHOOSE FROM:

ECW Hardcore Logo	RVD 4.20
Sandman	New Jack 187
Tommy Dreamer	ECW Foursome
Sabu Homicidal	Balls & Axl
Taz 6:32	Justin Credible
ECW Join Revolution	No Corporate
ECW Experience Oiff.	F.K The World
Jerry Lynn	Rob Van Dam
ECW Not For Everyone	Sabu Insanity
Taz Survive	Tammy

Also Available:
ECW Baseball Cap - $20.00 Each

ECW EXTREME MUSIC
CD- $20.00 Each Cassette- $15.00 Each

WWF T-SHIRTS

All T-shirts made from 100% cotton. All shirts come in adult and kid sizes.

Kids T-shirts ..... 15.00 ea. Sizes Available: Kids Medium, Kids Large, Kids X-Large
Adult T-shirts ..... 20.00 ea. Sizes Available: Adult Medium, Adult Large, Adult X-Large, Adult XX-Large

Austin Rattlesnake

Austin 3:16

Whoop Ass

Stone Cold

AustinSmoking Skull

Dude Love

Austin Slant

Kane-Bearer of Pane

Steve Austin #1

DGenX Logo

Owen Hart #1

WWF Attitude

Undertaker Buried Alive

Austin- Do Not Trust

Sable

Ken Shamrock

New Age Outlaws

Mankind

Undertaker/Ministry

Chyna

Stone Cold University

Austin: Raise Hell

Also Available:

The Rock, Know Your Role
D-Generation X (Green Logo)
Sable Bomb
Val Venis (Hello Ladies)
Al Snow
Jeff Jarrett (Don't Piss Me Off)
Boss Man
The Brood (Beware of the Brood)
Legion of Doom
Marc Mero #1
British Bulldog #1
Goldust & Marlena #1
Psycho Sid #1
Headbangers
Big Show
JOB Squad
Debra (Puppies)
Billy Gunn Ass
Godfather
X-Pac
Road Dogg Kickin
Triple H Game
Triple H Champ
Tori Pretty Face
Hardcore Holly
Mankind Smiley Face
DX Suck It
Rock People's Champ
Kane Kiss My Ash
Kane-Razing Kane
Mankind & Socko
Undertaker Gravestone
Undertaker RIP
Undertaker I'll Bury You
Undertaker Lightning
Undertaker Lord
Undertaker Ministry
Austin Blood Rattle
Austin Take Down
Austin Bottom Line
Austin No Mercy
Austin Oversize Skull
Austin 3 Skulls
Whoop Ass Ale

ECW 6 Inch Figures

Series 1	Series 2	Series 3
A) Shane Douglas	G) Lance Storm	L) Rob Van Dam
B) Sabu	H) Buh Buh Ray	M) Justin Credible
C) Rob Van Dam	I) D-Von	N) Tommy Dreamer
D) Justin Credible	J) Tommy Dreamer	O) Taz
E) Chris Candido	K) New Jack	P) Sabu
F) Taz		Q) New Jack

$10.00 each

WWF LIFESIZE STAND-UPS

Lifesize Standups are full color and actual size

Choose from:
Shawn Michaels
The Undertaker
Steve Austin
The Rock

$30.00 each

Note: These are only available to our United States customers. We can not send these overseas to other countries due to size of these For U.S. customers must give street address (no P.O. boxes).

WWF TRADING CARDS

WWF Wrestling Card Packs featuring Wrestlemania 3 by Topps (1987) Each pack contains 9 picture cards ..... $2.00 per pack or 10 packs for $10.00

Special Deal - Full factory box of 36 packs for only $20.00

WWF Superstars Sticker Packs by Euro Flash (made in Italy-1991) Each pack contains 6 full color stickers (made for the European market) ..... $1.00 per pack or 15 packs for $10.00

Classic WWF Trading Card Boxed Set (145 card set) Containing many WWF Superstars like Andre, Hulk, Ult. Warriors etc. ..... $10.00 complete set

Official Classic WWF Trading Card Binder with plastic sheets for the above 145 card set. This is like a baseball card binder that contains enough plastic sheet card protectors so you can put in the entire 145 card set ..... only $5.00 each

WWF Football Jerseys $40.00 each

Choose from: Adult Sizes - M L XL XXL

Stone Cold Rattlesnake
Stone Cold 3:16 Skull
Rock Bull Jersey

WWF BASEBALL CAPS $20.00 each

Austin 3:16
D-Generation X
Undertaker
Austin Camo Cap
Val Venis
WWF Attitude
The Rock

WWF Wallets $20.00 each

Choose from:
Stone Cold University
Stone Cold 3:16 Skull
Rock
DX Defy Authority
Undertaker

WWF 1994 ACTION PACKED TRADING CARDS

Each pack contains 6 different fully embossed trading cards. These are the best type of trading cards made. They look 3-D. Packs randomly contain: Colossal Crushers Subset cards, 24K Gold Leaf cards.

Prices:
$2.00 per pack 5 packs for $6.00
10 packs for $15.00
Complete set of all 42 cards for $20.00
100 Packs for $50.00

WWF PEWTER LAPEL PINS are $5.00 each or (5 for $20.00)

Choose from: Stone Cold Skull, Austin 3:16, Shawn Michaels, RIP Urn, Raw Is War, Shawn Heart, Ahmed Johnson, Sid, Legion of Doom, Sunny, WWF Logo, Vader, RIP Casket, Shawn Heartbreak Kid, Rocky Maivia

WWF DOG TAGS DOUBLE SIDED with 28 Inch Chain Necklace are $10.00 each or (2 for $18.00)

Choose from: Stone Cold Austin Skull, Undertaker, Shawn Michaels, Marc Mero, Austin 3:16 logo, Legion of Doom, Savio Vega, Flash Funk, Vince 3:16, Chyna, Rock (Smell), Rock (Bull Logo), Venis, DX (Suck It), Pimpin Ain't Easy, Heartbreak Kid, We Want Puppies, Brood Blood Bath

WWF Keychains are $8.00 each or (2 for $15.00)

Choose from: Bret Hitman Hart, Undertaker RIP Urn, Stone Cold Skull and Austin 3:16 logo, Jeff Jarrett, Texas Rattlesnake, Other Side Jackass, Know Your Role Blvd., Jabronie Drive, Ho Train

Stone Cold Skull Desk Clock are $25.00 each

WCW Stand-Ups $30.00 each

Life-size stand-ups are full color and actual size.

Choose from:
Goldberg
Scott Hall
Kevin Nash

Note: These are only available to U.S. customers. We cannot ship these to Canada or overseas due to their size. U.S. customers must give a street address. (NO P.O. Boxes)

WCW Bedding

Sheet Sets:
Twin ..... $35.00 each
Full ..... $45.00 each
Pillow Cases ..... $10.00 each

Comforters:
Twin (62 by 86) ..... $60.00 each
Full (76 by 86) ..... $65.00 each

Blankets:
(72 by 90) Blanket ..... $20.00 each

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Rod Pocket (82 by 63) ..... $35.00 each
Valance (84 by 15) ..... $20.00 each

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WWF PHOTOS & POSTERS

Official 8x10 Full Color Glossy Photos
$5.00 each or (any 5 for $20.00)
(photos are put in a plastic sleeve for protection)

Choose from:

The Undertaker	Undertaker Collage	Headbangers
Sunny	Vader	British Bulldog
Marc Mero	Shawn Michaels	Mankind
Ameed Johnson	Golddust	Steve Austin (6 Diff)
Legion of Doom	Ken Shamrock	X-Pac
Helmsley & Chyna	Kane (W/Undertaker)	The Rock
Val Venis	Dude Love	Edge
Sable (back shot)	Sable (Beach)	Sable (Collage)
Sable (Bikini)	Jackyn	D-Generation X
Owen (composite)	Owen (commem.)	Test (pose)
Blackman	Road Dogg	Big Show(w/Vince)
HHH (Suck it)	Silva	Oddities
Blue Blazer	Chyna (w/Rifle)	Droz
Gangrel	Jeff Jarrett	Mark Henry
Marvelous Mero	Road Dogg	Steve Blackman
Silva	HHH (Suck it)	Oddities
Test	Hardy Boyz	Chris Jericho

Official Full Color Posters 24x36
$10.00 each choose from

STEVE AUSTIN Belt	Steve Austin Collage	AUSTIN Bang3:16
SABLE COLLAGE	UNDERTAKER	DX LOGO
ROCK SMELL	AUSTIN Skull	ROCK Collage
DX Collage	STONE COLD Snake	

6 FOOT TALL LIFE SIZE FULL COLOR POSTERS
$20.00 each Choose from: • STEVE AUSTIN • UNDERTAKER • ROCK

WWF Bop Bags

$10.00 each
Choose From:
Austin
Kane
Undertaker

WCW Bop Bags

$10.00 each
Choose From:
Goldberg, Sting

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$20.00 each

ADULT SIZES: Medium Large X-Large
KIDS' SIZES: Small Medium Large

Autographed Plaques

Choose From:
Hogan
DDP
Nash
Konnan
Bam Bam
Mysterio

GOLDBERG
$60.00 each

Arn Anderson Book

$20.00 each
164 page book written by Arn Anderson with a foreword by Ric Flair.

6" WCW WRESTLING FIGURES

by San Francisco Toymakers (All figures mint on card)

1996 WCW 2nd Series Figures $15.00 each

Randy "Macho Man" Savage
Johnny B Badd (silver tights)
Ric Flair (green tights and boots)
Hulk Hogan #2 (yellow shirt w/ belt)
Vader #2 (black and red)

1997 WCW 3rd Series Figures $10.00 each

Hulk Hogan (Pre-ring yellow/red outfit) ..... Macho Man Randy Savage #2
Sting (new black and pink outfit) ..... Booker T (from Harlem Beat)
Ric Flair (red tights) ..... Stevie Ray (from Harlem Beat)
Big Bubba Rogers (black pants and hat) ..... The Giant (black tights)
Craig Pittman (in Marine outfit) ..... Alex Wright (leather jacket/blue tights)
Complete set of all 10 series 3 figures ..... $80.00 set

'97 WCW 3rd SERIES TAG-TEAM 2 PACKS

RARE Limited Edition "A Figures Inc. Exclusive!"

$25.00 per set (or any 2 sets for $40.00)

Choose from:
Harlem Heat (blue outfits) Blue Bloods!!!!
Nasty Boys (green outfits)
NWO Hulk Hogan & Macho Man Randy Savage (black outfits)

WCW WRESTLING RING (w/steel cage)

(Mint in box) $40.00 each

SUPERSIZE STUFFED HULK HOGAN DOLLS

These are Supersize Stuffed Hulk Hogan Dolls with a plush body with a detailed face. Hulk is wearing a "Python Power" bandana.

2 1/2 ft. Stuffed Hulk Hogan Doll ..... $25.00 ea.
3 1/2 ft. Stuffed Hulk Hogan Doll ..... $50.00 ea.
SPECIAL DEAL: Get Both Hulk Hogans for $70.00

WCW SLAM JAM - THE ORIGINAL WCW WRESTLING ALBUM

11 OFFICIAL THEME SONGS OF THE WCW STARS by Grand Theft Productions (1992)

Songs included are: "Don't Step to Ron"; "Man Called Sting"; "Mr. Bang Bang"; "Master of the DDT"; "Freebird Forever"; "Simply Ravishing"; "Johnny B Badd"; "The Natural"; "The Dragon"; "He's Smokin'"; "Steinerized"
Factory sealed by Grand Theft Records (1992)

Compact Disc version is $15.00
Cassette Tape version is $12.00

WCW Rare Collectibles

Hulk Hogan Foam Pose	$10.00 each
Classic Sting Notebook	$6.00 each
Classic Sting 3 Ring Binder	$6.00 each
Classic Sting Pencil Pouch	$6.00 each
Hulk Hogan Character Cap	$10.00 each
Hulk Hogan Signature Cap	$10.00 each
Jimmy Hart Megaphone	$5.00 each
Sting Foam Finger	$10.00 each
Road Warriors Vest & Arm set	$15.00 per set
Bash at Beach Shark Koolie	$5.00 each
Macho Man Green Foam Hat	$10.00 each
Bash at the Beach Towel	$15.00 each
1998 WCW Calendar	$10.00 each
NWO Racing Koolie	$5.00 each
Flair Coin Bank	$5.00 each
Giant Coin Bank	$5.00 each
Macho Man Coin Bank	$5.00 each
Nash Coin Bank	$5.00 each
Sting Coin Bank	$5.00 each
Hall Coin Bank	$5.00 each
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Macho Man Poster	$6.00 each
Vintage Hulk Hogan Poster	$6.00 each
Vintage Sting Poster	$6.00 each

1999 WCW Toy Biz Action Figures

6 inch Ring Fighters
$15.00 each or (set of 4 for $50.00)
Chris Benoit, Booker T, Scott Steiner, Bret Hart

6 inch Slam 'n' Crunch
$15.00 each or (set of 4 for $50.00)
Sting, Goldberg, Buff Bagwell, Konnan

Brawlin' Bikers
$15.00 each or (set of 3 for $50.00)
Sting, Goldberg, Diamond Dallas Page

6 inch Grip 'n' Flip
$20.00 per pair
Goldberg vs. Hogan, Raven vs. DDP, Jericho vs. Malenko

Steel Slammers 8 Pack
$25.00 each
Sting, Hogan, Giant, DDP, Nash, Luger, Macho Man, Hall

6 inch Head Ringers
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Sting, Goldberg, Hogan, DDP

Bend-Ems
$7.00 each or (any 4 for $25.00)
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6 inch Ring Masters
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WCW PHOTOS & POSTERS

Official 8x10 Full Color Glossy Photos **$5.00 each or (any 5 for $20.00)**
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Choose from:

Ric Flair	Sting	DDP	Chris Jericho	Saturn
Kevin Nash	Goldberg	Lex Luger	Disco Inferno	Elizabeth
Scott Hall	Bret Hart	Chris Benoit	Eric Bischoff	Savage
Hollywood Hogan	Nitro Girls	Booker T	4 Horsemen	Hak

23 INCH BY 35 INCH FULL COLOR POSTERS

$8.00 each or (any 2 for $15.00)

Choose from:

Goldberg	Hollywood Hogan	Sting(red)	
NWO Red Logo	NWO Black Logo	Giant	
Wolfpac Poster	Kidman	Buff Bagwell	
Nitro Girls			

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A killer black t-shirt w/ blood red Badstreet logo !00% cotton

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Featuring Michael Hayes, the Freebirds and the Badstreet Band, produced by Jimmy Page. A cassette from 1987 by Grand Theft Productions. Great sounding w/ 11 songs featuring the hit "Badstreet USA" Factory sealed by Grand Theft Productions (1987)

CD or Cassette versions are $15.00 each

BADSTREET U.S.A. - THE VIDEO (1984).....$20.00 per copy

WCW Rare Collectible T-Shirts

$15.00 each (Please Specify Size)
Choose from: M L XL XXL

Outsiders Logo T-Shirt
Macho Man Tear Away T-Shirt
NWO Rodman T-Shirt
Giant Choke Slam T-Shirt
Macho Man Jail Cage T-Shirt
Bret Hart American Flag T-Shirt
Giant Signature T-Shirt
Anti-Hulkamania T-Shirt
Macho Man Madness T-Shirt
Hogan Signature T-Shirt
Ric Flair Champion T-Shirt
Harlem Heat T-Shirt
Dungeon of Doom T-Shirt
Macho Man Signature T-Shirt
Public Enemy #69 Hockey Jersey
Sting Starburst T-Shirt (KIDS SIZES ONLY)
Public Enemy Cartoon T-Shirt
Bash at the Beach 1996 T-Shirt
4 Horsemen Photo T-Shirt
Fall Brawl 1998 Caged T-Shirt
Fall Brawl Rage in Cage 1997 T-Shirt
WCW Motorsports Golf Shirt
Hollywood Hogan T-Shirt
Sting (white) T-Shirt
NWO Racing #49 Race Car T-Shirt
NWO Racing Golf Shirt
Property of NWO Racing T-Shirt

OTHER WCW CARDS

Complete set of 161 WCW cards featuring Flair, IRS, Steiner Bros., Sting, Freebirds, etc. (1991) **$10.00 per set**

WCW MAIN EVENT TRADING CARDS

WCW Main Event 1995 Trading Cards by Cardz Inc. These came out in 1995 and contain Hulk Hogan, Ric Flair, Macho Man Savage, Arn Anderson, etc.
(100 card set for $20.00)

WRESTLING MAGAZINE GRAB BAG

Wrestling Eye, Wrestling Fury, PWI Wrestling All Stars, etc. (your choice)

1990s (any 4 for $10.00)
1980s (any 4 for $10.00)

WCW Rare Hulk Hogan Tear Away T-Shirt

$15.00 each (One Size Fits All)

WCW Rare Hulk Hogan Doo Rag

$5.00 each

1998 WCW NITRO FIGURES SERIES 1, 2 & 3

by San Francisco Toy Company

Choose From:

6 Inch Nitro Action Figures with Action Feature

DDP	Hollywood Hogan	Goldberg
Raven	Randy Savage	Sting (Red Face)
The Giant	Curt Henning	Scott Steiner
Sting(White)	Scott Hall	Buff Bagwell
Kevin Nash	Lex Luger	Rey Mysterio, Jr.
Ric Flair	Bret Hart	

4 1/2 Inch Poseable Action Figure 4-Packs

WCW Monday Nitro 4 Figure Pack $25.00/set
CONTAINS: Sting, Lex Luger, Rick Steiner & Ric Flair

NWO 4 Figure Pack $25.00/set
CONTAINS: Hollywood Hogan, Randy Savage, Scott Steiner & Kevin Nash

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- Highly detailed with 3 points of articulation
- Compatible with other 6 inch action figures on the market now
- Limited to only 10,000 figures and each figure comes mint on card

COMING SOON!

Series 5 - Tony Atlas
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Choose from:
- -Regular King Kong Bundy
- -Blood Splattered King Kong Bundy
- -Regular Abdullah The Butcher
- -Blood Splattered Abdullah The Butcher
- -Regular Killer Kowalski
- -Blood Splattered Killer Kowalski
- -Regular Ivan Putski
- -Blood Splattered Ivan Putski

$8.00 each -OR- 2 for $15.00

NEW WWF ACTION FIGURES-WWF SUPERSTARS
By Jakks Toys (1996-1999) New line of WWF Action Figures based on some of the most popular WWF Superstars. Each figure has a **"Bone Crunching Sound"** when posed. These action figures are 6" tall.

ALL JAKKS FIGURES ARE $15.00 EACH

OR (ANY 6 FOR $75.00)

Choose from:

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Bret Hart #1 (BlackShirt/Pink Pants)

2nd Series
VaderDiret Hart #2 (Red Shirt/Black Pants)
•Shawn Michaels (Red Outfit)

3rd Series
Bret Hart #3•Shawn Michaels #3•Sid•British Bulldog
Ahmed Johnson •Mankind

4th Series
Jerry "The King" Lawler•Faarooq
Justin Hawk Bradshaw•Vader #2•HHH

5th Series
•Sycho Sid•Rocky Maivia
Flash Funk•Ken Shamrock•Savio Vega

6th Series
Marc Mero•Jeff Jarrett•HHH
Mark Henry•Steve Blackman

S.T.O.M.P. Series 1
Ahmed Johnson•Undertaker•Crush
Ken Shamrock•Steve Austin

S.T.O.M.P. Series 2
Steve Austin•Chyna•Rocky Maivia•Mosh•Thrasher • Owen

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Hunter Hearst Helmsley #2

Signature Series 2
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B. A. Billy Gunn • Shawn Michaels

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New Undertaker •Goldust •Bret Hart•Mankind•Faarooq
Steve Austin

Slammers Series 2
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Taka Michinoku

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Undertaker• Savio Vega •Rocky Maivia •Hawk Animal• Henry Godwin• •Phineas Godwin

Ringside Collection
Sable • Vince McMahon •Sunny •Jim Cornette • Jim Ross •Sgt. Slaughter

Titan Tron Live Series 1
Steve Austin-Rock-Undertaker-Mankind-Road Dogg-Kane

Titan Tron Live Series 2
Big Show-X-Pac-Steve Austin-Rock-Shamrock-Kane

Titan Tron Live Smack Down Series 1
Triple H-X-Pac-Edge-billy Gunn-Gangrel-Shane McMahon

Titan Tron Live Smack Down Series 2
Austin-Edge-Mankind-Road Dogg-Undertaker-HHH

Maximum Sweat 4
Austin-Undertaker-Kane-Road Dogg-Billy Gunn-Droz

Back Talkin Crushers
Austin-Rock-Big Show-Undertaker

Shotgun Saturday Night Series 3
Kurgann-Edge-HHH-Road Dogg-Droz
Stone Cold

7th Series
Venis-Undertaker-Edge-Stone Cold-Dr.Death

Series 8- Team Corporate
Big Boss Man-Michaels-Shane McMahon
The Rock-Shamrock-Kane

Series 9
Big Show-Gangrel-Christian-Bob Holly
Undertaker-Vince McMahon

Fully Loaded Series 1
Kane-HHH-Al Snow-Billy Gunn-Road Dogg
The Rock

Fully Loaded Series 2
Stone Cold-Test-Road Dogg-The Rock
X-Pac-Shane McMahon

Raw Is War
Undertaker-Stone Cold-The Rock-Mankind

Breakdown In Your House
X-Pac-Droz-Stone Cold-Mankind-D'Lo Brown-Goldust

Maximum Sweat Series 1
Undertaker-The Rock-Kane-Stone Cold
Michaels-HHH

$20.00 each or (4 for $75.00)

Tag Team 2 Figure Packs
L.O.D.-New Blackjacks-Headbangers
The Godwinns

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2 Tuff Series 4 2 Figure Packs
Rock/Mankind-Undertaker/Kane-Bossman/Austin-Venis/Billy Gunn

2 Tuff Series 5 2 Figure Packs
Viscera-Undertaker-Rock/Austin-Debra/Jarrett-Billy Gunn/Road Dogg

MONSTER RING
TO FIT 6 INCH JAKKS ACTION FIGURES
$30.00 each

CHAMPIONSHIP BELTS FOR WRESTLING FIGURES
THESE BELTS FIT THE FOLLOWING ACTION FIGURES

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UNITED STATES

ALABAMA

HUNTSVILLE—WCW at the Von Braun Center: **Norman Smiley** beat **Fit Finlay** ... **The Demon** defeated **Hugh Morrus** ... Cruiserweight champion **The Artist** beat **Lash LeRoux** ... **Yang** & **Jamie-san** defeated **Rave** & **Frog** ... **The Maestro** defeated **Mr. Jones** ... **Ernest "The Cat" Miller** beat **The Maestro** ... **David Flair** & **Crowbar** beat **Harlem Heat 2000** ... **Curt Hennig** beat **The Wall** and **Bam Bam Bigelow** in a three-way match.
(04-09-00)

—Dominick Valenti

CALIFORNIA

LIVINGSTON—All Pro Wrestling at the High School: ***In quarterfinal matches of the Internet title tournament:*** **Boyce LeGrande** defeated **Vinny Massaro** ... **Chad Collyer** beat **Jardi Frantz** ... **Donovan Morgan** defeated **Jack Perez** ... **Michael Modest** beat **Robert Thompson** when referee **Jimmy Bodine** stopped the match because of Thompson's excessive bleeding ... ***In non-tournament matches:*** **The Snott Brothers** & **Vance Vain** defeated **Jason Goodwin, Mark Smith,** & **Hardcore Comini** ... **Frank Murdoch** defeated universal champion **Ma'och** to win the title ... ***In the semifinals of the Internet title tournament:*** LeGrande defeated Collyer ... Morgan beat Modest ... ***In the finals of the Internet title tournament:*** Morgan defeated LeGrande.
(04-15-00)

—Rusty Lester

LOS ANGELES—Xtreme Pro Wrestling at the L.A. Sports Arena: **El Salcero** beat **Mosco de la Merced** ... **Tool** defeated **Dynamite D** ... **The Westsiders** and **Kaos** & **Steve Rizzono** fought to a no-contest ... Heavyweight champion **Chris Candido** defeated **Shane Douglas** and **Sabu** in a triple threat match ... **Damien** beat **Halloween** ... **Kronus** defeated **Jimmy the Homeless Guy** in a falls-count-anywhere match ... **Damien Steele** beat **Carlito Montana** ... **Pogo the Clown** defeated **Jake Lawless** by disqualification ... **Johnny Webb** beat **The Messiah** in a steel cage match ... King of the death match champion **Supreme** defeated **Axl Rotten.**
(04-15-00)

—Todd Young

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON—WWF Backlash pay-per-view at the MCI Center: World tag team champions **Christian** & **Edge** beat **Road Dogg** & **X-Pac** ... Light heavyweight champion **Dean Malenko** defeated **Scotty Too Hotty** ... **Big Bossman** & **Bull Buchanan** defeated **Bradshaw** & **Faarooq** ... Hardcore champion **Crash Holly** won a six-way match against **Jeff Hardy, Matt Hardy, Bob Holly, Perry Saturn,** and **Tazz** ... **The Big Show** defeated **Kurt Angle** ... **Test** & **Albert** beat **The Dudley Boyz** ... European champion **Eddie Guerrero** beat **Essa Rios** ... Intercontinental champion **Chris Benoit** beat **Chris Jericho** by disqualification ... **The Rock** pinned World champion **Triple-H** to win the title.
(04-30-00)

—Will Welsh

FLORIDA

MILTON—Unified Championship Wrestling at the Santa Rosa Auditorium: **Minotaur** defeated **Lord Bisquit** ... **Wild Thing** defeated **Raine Quapone** and **Tommy Martinelli** in a three-way dance ... **Venom** beat **Illusion** ... **Big Nasty** & **Scorpion** beat **Frank Smith** & **The Aiky Breaky Kid** ... **Mr. Wrestling III** beat **Chad Cheetum** ... Alabama champion **Al Savage** beat **Joe Kane** ... **Bob** & **Scott Armstrong** defeated **Marcell Pringle** & **Steve Southern.**
(04-29-00)

—Jack Gray

JACKSONVILLE—Thunder Wrestling Federation at the Thunder Dome: Junior heavyweight champion **Phantom** defeated **Big Nasty** ... **Derukunesusu** beat **Tiger** ... TV champ **Johnnie Lee** defeated **O'Callaghan** ... **Alexander** & **Michael Figgs** beat **Python** & **Big Studd Hammer** ... **Dagon Briggs** & **Marty Gras** defeated **Florida Hurricane** & **Ashe Corvan** ... U.S. champ **Ghetto Superstar** beat **Johnnie Lee.**
(04-07-00)

—Michael R. Walker

GEORGIA

LA GRANGE—NWA at Callaway Auditorium: **Big Bully Douglas** beat **A.J. Styles** ... **Jamie-san** won a three-way match against **Adam Jacobs** and **Jung-yang** ... **Bad Attitude** defeated **The New South** ... **Paisley** defeated **Mona** in a streetfight ... **Ron Harris** beat **Fit Finlay** in a hardcore match ... **Chris Harris** defeated **Terry Taylor** ... NWA North American champion **The Colorado Kid** defeated **Jerry Lawler.**
(04-29-00)

—Dominick Valenti

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO—WCW Spring Stampede pay-per-view at the United Center: Chicago radio personality **Mancow** beat **Jimmy Hart** ... **Chris Candido** defeated **The Artist, Shannon Moore, Juventud Guerrera, Crowbar,** and **Lash LeRoux** in a six-way match to win the vacant cruiserweight title ... ***In the semifinals of the WCW World tag team title tournament:*** **Ric Flair** & **Lex Luger** beat **The Mamalukes** & **Don** & **Ron Harris** in a handicap match ... **Shane Douglas** & **Buff Bagwell** defeated **Harlem Heat 2000** ... ***In the finals of the WCW World tag team title tournament:*** Douglas & Bagwell defeated Flair & Luger to win the belts ... ***In the quarterfinals of the WCW U.S. title tournament:*** **Scott Steiner** beat **The Wall** by disqualification ... **Mike Awesome** defeated **Ernest Miller** ... **Sting** beat **Booker** ... **Vampiro** defeated **Billy Kidman** ... ***In the semifinals of the WCW U.S. title tournament:*** Steiner beat Awesome ... Sting defeated Vampiro ... ***In the finals of the WCW U.S. title tournament:*** Steiner beat Sting to win the vacant title ... ***In non-tournament matches:*** **Terry Funk** beat **Norman Smiley** to win the vacant hardcore title ... **Jeff Jarrett** defeated **"Diamond" Dallas Page** to win the vacant World title.
(04-17-00)

—Will Welsh

INDIANA

MARION—Extreme Wrestling Federation at the EWF Arena: **Billy Wright** beat **El Lunatico** ... **Casey Thunder** defeated **Pastor Pain** ... **Justin Kase** beat **Hypnosis** ... **Ruin** beat **Busta the Wicked Clown** ... **Gutter** beat **Rex Diamond** ... **Jack Hammer** defeated **Justin Sane** ... Lightweight champion **Shane Michaels** beat **Phoenix** ... Heavyweight champion **Grizzly** beat **The Flying Nun** ... Tag team champions **Tony Miller** & **Bob** beat **The Gutter Punks.**
(04-22-00)

—Dominick Valenti

PERU—Landmark Wrestling Federation at the Peru Circus Center: **Tank** and **A-Bomb** battled to a time-limit draw ... **Seminole Warrior** beat **El Morro** and **El Gavalon** in a three-way dance ... **Doc Cooper** beat **War Machine** ... **Randy Fuqua** defeated **Mr. Electricity** ... **Damon Star** pinned **The Edge** ... **Major Disaster** & **Sgt. Slam** defeated **The Dakota Warrior** & **The American Warrior** ... **Johnny B** defeated **Dozer** ... **Guy Lombardo** beat **Shawn Cook** ... **Doc Cooper** & **Randy Fuqua** beat **The House of Pain** to win the tag

team title ... **Kenny Nash** defeated **Abel** ... **Hammer** pinned **Viper** to regain the heavyweight title.
(04-22-00)

—Greg Baer

GREENSBURG—Wild Championship Wrestling Outlaws at the Parks Center: **Rob Ramer** and **Nate Webb** were the last two remaining wrestlers in the card's opening battle royal and thus earned a match against each other for the vacant Midwest title ... Heavyweight champion **Indiana Kidd Jr.** defeated **Lamar Erckle** ... **Don Basher** pinned **Corporal Burns** ... **Angelfire** defeated ladies champion **The Black Widow** in a non-title match ... **Johnnie Walker** and **Michael Manson** wrestled to a double-disqualification ... Tag team champions **The Country Boys** beat **Don Basher** & **The Executioner** ... Heavyweight champion **Indiana Kidd Jr.** defeated **The Soultaker** ... **Nate Webb** beat **Rob Ramer** to win the vacant Midwest title.
(04-15-00)

—Trevor Kline

INDIANAPOLIS—ECW at the Murat Center: **Chilly Willy** pinned **Johnny Swinger** ... **Danny Doring** & **Roadkill** beat **Da Baldies** ... **Mikey Whipwreck** defeated **Simon Diamond** ... **Rhino** beat **Kid Kash** ... **Nova** & **Chris Chetti** defeated **The Dangerous Alliance** ... **Super Crazy** beat **Little Guido** ... **Lance Storm** defeated **Raven** ... **Tazz** beat World champion **Mike Awesome** for the title.
(04-13-00)

—Brad Heich

KENTUCKY

HODGENVILLE—Bad 2 The Bone Wrestling at the Larue County Parks Building: **J.B. Thunder** defeated **Homicide** ... **Tasha** beat **Peter B. Kennedy** ... Heavyweight champion **Alister Fear** defeated **Psychodelic** and **Bio-Hazard** in a triple threat match ... **Mr. Corleone** beat **Manslaughter** in a streetfight ... **Bio-Hazard** pinned **Todd Morton.**
(04-22-00)

—Jason Thomas

SOMERSET—Hardcore Championship Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **The Heartbreakers** won a four-corners elimination match ... **Rick Gunner** beat **Brock Landers** ... **Chris Michaels** defeated **Johnny Hart** and **Denny Cooley** in a three-way match ... **Stan Sierra** beat **Stevie Phillips** ... **Shawn Christopher** defeated **Tracey Smothers** by reverse decision.
(04-15-00)

—Bill Needham

LOUISVILLE—Ohio Valley Wrestling at St. Therese's Gym: Heavyweight champion **Damaja** beat **Flash Flanagan** ... **Phil Phair** beat **Robert Briscoe** ... **B.J. Payne** & **Scotty Sabre** beat **Derrick King** & **Jason Lee** for the Southern tag team title ... **Trailer Park Trash** defeated **Jebediah** ... **Nick Dinsmore** beat **Rob Conway** in a coal miner's glove match ... **Robbie D** beat **Rico Constantino** ... **Russ McCullough** defeated **Mr. Black** ... **Russ McCullough** defeated **The Collector.**
(04-04-00)

—Dominick Valenti

MAINE

AUBURN—Eastern Wrestling Alliance at Edward Little High School: **Adam Hasty** won a three-way dance against **Damon D'Archangelo** and **Frankie Armadillo** to win the hardcore title ... **The Hardcore Hippie** beat **Purty Kurty** ... **Bob Evans** defeated **The Slayer** ... **Larry Huntley** beat **Dan Mason** ... **The Damned** wrestled to a double-disqualification with **Revelations** ... **Damon D'Archangelo** won a battle royal, last eliminating **Frankie Armadillo.**
(04-08-00)

—Dominick Valenti

PORTLAND—NWA New England at Southern Maine Technical College: **Wagner Brown** beat **Jason Rage** ... **Shane Williams** beat **Michael Monroe** ... **Beau Douglas** beat **Zachary Springate III** ... **Robbie Ellis** beat **Mark Nougelera** ... **Amanda Storm** beat **Violet Flame** ... **Brian Day** beat **Knuckles Nelson** ... **Tony Atlas** beat **Whacko** by disqualification ... **Nikolai Volkoff** beat **Kampalla the Destroyer.**
(03-31-00)

—Rich Palladino

MARYLAND

ANNAPOLIS—Maryland Championship Wrestling at the High School: **Romeo Valentino** pinned **Danny Rose** ... **Ricky Blues** defeated **Gregory Martin** ... Tag team champs **Earl the Pearl** & **Rich Myers** beat **2-Dope** & **Sydeswype** ... **Gillberg** defeated **Ronnie Zukko** ... **Chad Bowman** beat cruiserweight champion **Adam Flash** and **Qeenan Creed** to win the title ... **The Iron Sheik** defeated **Platinum Nat** ... **Christian York** & **Joey Matthews** beat **Dino Divine** & **Jimmy Cicero** ... Heavyweight champion **The Bruiser** pinned **Julio Fantastico.**
(04-14-00)

—Jeff Amdur

HAGERSTOWN—House of Pain Wrestling Federation at the House of Pain: **Dirty Bert** beat **John Geesey** ... **Syck** defeated **C.J. Southern** ... Tag team champs **Jimmy Jessup** & **The Freak** beat **Skru Face** & **Dirty Bert** ... **Skru Face** pinned **Tate Griffen** ... **Jerkface** defeated cruiserweight champion **Hyjinx** by forfeit for the title ... Cruiserweight champ **Jerkface** beat **Jimmy Jessup** ... National Wrestling League tag team champions **Aidlean** & **Flex Fenom** defeated **John Rambo** & **Gutterboy** ... **The Doc** and **Morgus the Maniac** fought to a draw ... **Dan Kallis** beat **Brian Anthony** and **Jon Rocker** in a triple threat match ... Shootfight champion **Jake David** defeated **Leslie Leatherman** ... National Wrestling League cruiserweight champion **John Balsamo** beat **O.G.B.** ... **Fantasia** defeated **Malcolm Y** in a hair vs. mask match. After losing the match, Malcolm Y removed his mask to reveal a second mask underneath ... **Dan Kallis** won a battle royal.
(04-11-00)

—Michael J. DiMuzio

DUNDALK—Mid-Eastern Wrestling Federation at the Sher-Wes Gardens: Heavyweight champion **Bob Starr** defeated **Nick the Constrictor** ... **Cat Burglar, Mr. Destiny,** & **Tony Hightower** defeated **DOA, Freak,** & **Blood** ... Heavyweight champion **Bob Starr** beat **Whiplash** ... **Dino Casanova** & **Buzz Striker** wrestled **Max Thrasher** & **The Natural** to a no-contest ... **Morgus the Maniac** defeated **Smoky Maivia** ... **Patch** defeated heavyweight champion **Bob Starr** to win the title ... **Ruckus** beat **Shane Golden** ... Tag team champions **Flexx Wheeler** & **O-Dogg** defeated **The Tokyo Terrors** ... **Glen Osbourne** beat **Cypress** ... **Reign** defeated Mid-Atlantic champion **Otto Sthark** by disqualification ... **Buzz Striker** won a battle royal.
(03-31-00)

—Jeff Amdur & Tyler Cates

(Continued on page 52)

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arena reports

(Continued from page 51)

MISSOURI

ST. CHARLES—*ECW On TNN* TV taping at the Family Arena: **Chilly Willy** beat **Johnny Swinger** ... **Nova** & **Chris Chetti** defeated **The Dangerous Alliance** ... **H.C. Loc** beat **Simon Diamond** ... **Danny Doring** & **Roadkill** defeated **Little Guido** & **Sal E. Graziano** ... **Super Crazy** beat **Kid Kash** ... World tag team champs **Justin Credible** & **Lance Storm** beat **Raven** & **Mikey Whipwreck** ... **New Jack, The Sandman,** & **Tommy Dreamer** beat **Steve Corino, Jack Victory,** & **Yoshihiro Tajiri.**
(04-16-00)

—Bill Cliff

NEBRASKA

OMAHA—WCW at the Aksarben Coliseum: **Jamie-San** & **Kaz Hayashi** beat **Shane Helms** & **Shannon Moore** ... **Little Jeannie** and **Mona** fought to a no-contest ... **Tank Abbott** beat **The Barbarian** ... **Chris Kanyon** defeated **Brian Knobs** ... **Big Vito** & **Johnny the Bull** beat **Ron** & **Don Harris** ... **Terry Funk** defeated **Dustin Rhodes** ... **Buff Bagwell, Booker,** & **Billy Kidman** beat **Ric Flair, Lex Luger,** & **Sting.**
(04-14-00)

—Richard Peacock

NEW JERSEY

BORDENTOWN—Danger Zone Championship Wrestling at the Armory: **Savage Pain** beat **Johnny Roc** ... **Maverick** defeated **Draven McKnight** ... **Tundra** wrestled to a double-countout with **Mason Star** ... **Patch** wrestled to a double-countout with **Tommy Cairo** ... **Sabbath** beat **Max Havoc** ... **Nubius Black** beat **Derrick Star** ... **Tommy Golden** defeated **David Patera** ... The four-way elimination match involving **The Cremator, Rodney Farr, Draven McKnight,** and **Johnny Greco** ended in a time-limit draw after McKnight and Greco were eliminated.
(04-28-00)

—Dominick Valenti

VINELAND—World Wrestling Council at Chichi's: **Joel Medina** & **Jose Rivera III** beat **The Crazy Irishman** & **A.J.** ... **The Black Diamonds** defeated **Little Louie Thunder** & **Dave Mysterio** ... **The Giant Leprechaun** beat **Hammer** by disqualification ... **Alexus** defeated **Izzy Gorgeous** ... **Twisted Metal** beat **White Lightning** ... **Joey Rivera** pinned **Bodybag.**
(04-28-00)

—Kevin Kirby

EGG HARBOR—NWA-Jersey at the High School: **White Lotus** & **Diego Demario** defeated **Trooper Matolla** & **Breaker Moran** ... **El Lizard** pinned **The Sharp Dressed Man** ... **911** beat **Biggie Biggs** & **Rocco Dorsey** in a handicap match ... **The Patriot** defeated **The Honky Tonk Man** ... **Amy Lee** beat **Nicole Bass** ... **Public Enemy** defeated **The Pit Bulls** ... **Tommy Cairo** beat **Slayer** and **Biggie Biggs** in a three-way ladder match to win the Outlaws of Wrestling title.
(04-15-00)

—Dorthy Sultana

NEW YORK

POUGHKEEPSIE—ECW at the Mid-Hudson Civic Center: **Little Guido** beat **Johnny Swinger** ... **Tommy Dreamer** defeated **Simon Diamond** ... **Lance Storm** beat **Kid Kash** ... **Chris Chetti** & **Nova** defeated **C.W. Anderson** & **Bill Wiles** ... **Danny Doring** & **Roadkill** beat **Angel** & **Tony DeVito** ... World champion **Justin Credible** beat **Mikey Whipwreck** ... **Jerry Lynn** defeated **Scotty Antol** ... **The Sandman** & **Yoshihiro Tajiri** defeated **Steve Corino** & **Rhino.**
(04-29-00)

—Stephen MacDonald

NEW YORK—WWF at Madison Square Garden: Light heavyweight champion **Dean Malenko** beat **Scotty Too Hotty** ... European champion **Eddie Guerrero** defeated **Tazz** ... **Big Bossman** & **Bull Buchanan** beat **The Headbangers** ... Hardcore champion **Crash Holly** defeated **Perry Saturn** ... World tag team champs **Edge** & **Christian** defeated **The Hardy Boyz** and **The Dudley Boyz** in a three-way match ... **Test** & **Albert** beat **Al Snow** & **Steve Blackman** ... **Kurt Angle** defeated **Val Venis** ... Intercontinental champion **Chris Benoit** beat **Chris Jericho** ... **Rikishi Phatu** and **The Big Show** fought to a double-countout ... **Triple-H, Road Dogg,** & **X-Pac** defeated **The Rock** & **The Acolytes.**
(04-15-00)

—Frank Krewda

BUFFALO—ECW at the Bert Flickenger Center: **Chilly Willy** defeated **Johnny Swinger** ... **Mikey Whipwreck** beat **Prodigy** ... **Rhino** pinned **Kid Kash** ... **Danny Doring** & **Roadkill** beat **Steve Corino** & **Jack Victory** ... **C.W. Anderson** beat **Raven** ... World tag team champions **Justin Credible** & **Lance Storm** beat **Chris Chetti** & **Nova** ... **Yoshihiro Tajiri** beat TV champion **Super Crazy** and **Little Guido** in a three-way match to win the belt ... **Tommy Dreamer** & **New Jack** defeated **Angel** & **Tony DeVito.**
(04-08-00)

—Dominick Valenti

NORTH CAROLINA

GREENSBORO—WWF at the Greensboro Coliseum Complex: World tag team champions **Christian** & **Edge** defeated **The Dudley Boyz** and **Jeff** & **Matt Hardy** in a three-way dance ... **The Godfather** beat **Viscera** ... **Test** & **Albert** beat **The Headbangers** ... Hardcore champion **Crash Holly** beat **Bob Holly** ... Light heavyweight champion **Scotty Too Hotty** beat **Dean Malenko** ... **Bradshaw** defeated **Road Dogg** ... **Terri** beat **The Kat** in an arm-wrestling match ... European champion **Eddie Guerrero** beat **Kurt Angle** ... **Rikishi Phatu** beat **The Big Show** ... **Chris Jericho** & **The Rock** defeated **Chris Benoit** & **Triple-H.**
(04-23-00)

—Dominick Valenti

HENDERSON—USWF at the National Guard Armory: **The American Kid** beat **Masa Fuchi Ogawa** ... **The Hillbilly** defeated **Jiggy** ... Tag team champs **Hardtimes** & **Charles Shaft** beat **Diamond Dave** & **Triple-X** ... Hardcore champ **David Lee Gilbert** won a hardcore battle royal ... Heavyweight champion **David Blanchard** defeated **L.A. Wild One** by disqualification.
(04-15-00)

—W.C. Smith

FOREST CITY—Eastern Wrestling Federation at the National Guard Armory: **Hell Razor** & **Krank** defeated **Josh Steinborn** & **Kevin Kirby** ... TV champion **Saki Liger** defeated **The Rough Rider** in a spur-on-a-pole match ... **Big Mac Truck** & **Hunter Thompson** beat **Abel Atoms** & **Ricky Noble** by countout ... **Axl Knight** defeated **Miles Long** by disqualification ... **Necro** beat **The Carolina Pit Bull** ... Cruiserweight champ **Valor** defeated **Ace Cauldrone** ... **Grungemaster** & **Jeff Hamrick** beat **IDS Huey** & **Psycho** ... **Matt Grimm** defeated **Zack Ruckus.**
(04-08-00)

—Dan Parris

OHIO

LUCASVILLE—Superstars Wrestling Federation at Cherokee Hall: **Hartbreaker** beat **Pyro** ... **The Freak Show** defeated **The Players Club** to win the tag team title ... **Tank Runyon** and **Crusher Bonz** wrestled to a no-contest ... **Randy Allen** beat **Chris Brown** ... **Peaches** defeated **Kid Sensation** ... **Rollin' Hard** beat **Ash** ... **Tyrin** defeated **Suicide Kid** ... **Anne Marie Crooks** & **Tank Runyon** beat **Prince Justice** & **Chris Harris** ... **Sam Cody** defeated **Tower of Doom.**
(04-14-00)

—Shawn Runings

MIDDLETOWN—Heartland Wrestling Association at the National Guard Armory: **Bobby Casanova** beat **B.J. Whitmer** ... **Logan Caine** & **Rory Fox** defeated **Bennie the Bookie** & **Tim Moxley** ... **Chip Fairway** beat **J.J. Duquesne** ... **Matt Stryker** defeated **Astin Augustus Ambrose** ... Cruiserweight champion **Shark Boy** beat **Chad Collyer** ... Tag team champions **Cody Hawk** & **Mad Anthony McMurphy** defeated **Alexis Machine** & **Brian Fury.**
(04-12-00)

—Brady Laber

PENNSYLVANIA

HERSHEY—WWF at Hersheypark Arena: **Bob Holly** beat **Al Snow** ... **Bull Buchanan** defeated **Bradshaw** ... Hardcore champion **Crash Holly** beat **Steve Blackman** ... European champion **Eddie Guerrero** beat **Tazz** ... **Kane** pinned **Big Bossman** ... Intercontinental champion **Chris Benoit** defeated **Chris Jericho** by disqualification ... **Terri** defeated **The Kat** in an arm-wrestling match ... Light heavyweight champion **Dean Malenko** beat **Scotty Too Hotty** ... **The Big Show** pinned **Kurt Angle** ... World tag team champions **Edge** & **Christian** beat **Test** & **Albert, The Hardy Boyz,** and **The Dudley Boyz** in a four-way match.
(04-29-00)

—Dominick Valenti

BETHLEHEM—ECW at Stabler Arena: **Chilly Willy** beat **Johnny Swinger** ... **Danny Doring** & **Roadkill** beat **Little Guido** & **Sal E. Graziano** ... **Ricky Banderas** beat **Akuma** ... **Mikey Whipwreck** defeated **Simon Diamond** ... **Mahoney** & **Masato Tanaka** defeated **Angel** & **Tony DeVito** ... **Bill Wiles** wrestled to a no-contest with **H.C. Loc** ... **Rhino** beat **Super Crazy** ... **Tommy Dreamer, The Sandman,** & **New Jack** defeated **Steve Corino, Yoshihiro Tajiri,** & **Jack Victory.**
(04-21-00)

—Frank Vitucci

PALO ALTO—Future Wrestling Alliance's "International Invasion" at the Fire Company Hall: **Abunai** won a triangle match over **Embalmer** and **Ric Blade** ... **Li'l Cholo, Mariachi Loco,** & **Matt Shaft** defeated **Black Metal, King Jackal,** & **Ice Kid** ... **High Voltage** beat **Nick Burke** ... **Lo-Ki** pinned **Mike Mayhem** ... **Bad Crew** defeated **Monsta Mack** & **Mafia** in a table match ... Heavyweight champion **Mike Quackenbush** and **El Hijo del Santo** wrestled to a 15-minute time-limit draw ... **Saboth** beat **Maxx Havoc** ... **Tommy Idol** & **Qeenan Creed** beat **Gregory Martin** & **Danny Rose** to win the tag team title ... **Jake Daniels** pinned **Cremator** ... **Saboth** pinned **D.Z. Gillespie.**
(04-15-00)

—Timothy A. Walker

READING—International Wrestling Association at the Riverside Beneficial Association: **Headshrinker Samu** defeated **Oxx Hogg** ... **Jimmy Deo** and **Rapid Fire Maldonado** wrestled to a no-contest ... **The Damned** defeated **J.D. Powers** & **The Brooklyn Bomber** ... **Vince Bono** beat **Evan Leppy** ... **Al Harris** defeated **Slambo T. Clown** ... **The Hooch Hollar Boys** & **Rapid Fire Maldonaldo** beat **The Backseat Boyz** & **Jimmy Deo.**
(04-14-00)

—Eric Dennery

WEST NEWTON—Far North Wrestling at the West Newton Gym: **Toby Cline** defeated **Dennis Gregory** and **K.C. Hammer** in a three-way match ... **Terik the Great** and **American Kickboxer** fought to a 20-minute draw ... **Seth James** beat **Cousin Elmer** ... Heavyweight champ **Dynamite Dean** defeated **Lord Zoltan** ... **Bigg Playa** beat **Cyrus Steele** ... **Bison** defeated **Shirley Doe** ... **T. Rantula** beat **King Kong Bundy**.
(04-07-00)

—Stephen Anthony

RHODE ISLAND

SOUTH KINGSTOWN—Rhode Island Wrestling Alliance at the High School: **Vicious Vic** beat **Louie Scolardi** and **Rusty Calisi** in a triple threat match ... **Danny Cama** defeated **Lord Davios** ... **Jose Perez** beat **Kevin Charisma** ... **Horrible Howard** & **Earthquake White** defeated **Gregory Drago** & **The Dragon Kid** ... **Trash** beat **Dante** ... **Travis Savage** defeated **Livewire** ... TV champion **Danger Boy Alfredo** beat **Jolly Jules** ... **Jason Chaos** & **Suicidal Youth** defeated **Dallas Austin** & **Mark Thunder** to win the New England Wrestling Alliance tag team title ... **Max Brannigan** beat **Pierre the Mountie** to win the New England Wrestling Alliance heavyweight title.
(04-12-00)

—Al Travieso

SOUTH DAKOTA

SIOUX FALLS—WCW at the Sioux Falls Arena: **Jamie-San** & **Kaz Hayashi** beat **Shane Helms** & **Shannon Moore** ... **Chris Kanyon** beat **Brian Knobs** ... **Mona** and **Little Jeannie** fought to a no-contest ... **Tank Abbott** defeated **The Barbarian** ... **Big Vito** & **Johnny the Bull** beat **Ron** & **Don Harris** ... **Terry Funk** defeated **Dustin Rhodes** ... **Vampiro, Booker,** & **Billy Kidman** beat **Ric Flair, Lex Luger,** & **Sting.**
(04-13-00)

—Cindy Barber

TENNESSEE

MEMPHIS—Power Pro Wrestling TV taping at WMC-TV studios: **Moondog Spot** & **Ali** beat **The Regulators** ... **Lance Jade** & **Aristocrat** defeated **Alan Steele** & **Havoc** ... **Brandon Baxter** and **Blade Boudreaux** fought to a no-contest ... **Derrick King** beat **Wolfie D.**
(04-15-00)

—Liz Plaat

TEXAS

MISSOURI CITY—Warriors of Wrestling at the Community Center: **The German Conxtion** beat **Tornado Marinelli** ... **Jade** and **Johnny Blade** fought to a draw ... **Big Rig** defeated **Cajun Kid** ... **Bulldozer** beat **Iron Eagle** ... **Johnny Blade** defeated **Sweetman** ... **Justin Walker** beat **Chaz** ... **Li'l Chico** defeated **Hayze** and **10-Gauge** in a three-way match.
(04-10-00)

—Butch Russell

VIRGINIA

LYNCHBURG—North American Wrestling Alliance TV taping at the NAWA Arena: **Mr. Breeze** beat **The Punk** ... U.S. champion **Dorty Reid** and **Shane Hooker** wrestled to a time-limit draw ... **Miss Sunshine** pinned **Lady Scorpion** ... **K.D. Campbell** & **Iceman** defeated **Mr. X I & II** ... Tag team champs **The Russian Mafia** beat **The Big E** & **John Stone** ... **Gino Blanchard** pinned heavyweight champ **The Intimidator** in a non-title match.
(04-22-00)

—C. Shane Cochran

SALTVILLE—Southern States Wrestling at the Elementary School: **Seth Little** pinned **The Mighty Destroyer** ... **Flex Armstrong** beat **Beau James** ... **Death Row** defeated **Seth Little** and **G Dogg** in a triple threat match ... **Ron Ray** defeated Appalachian champion **Chuck Jones** by countout ... Tag team champions **Iron Cross** & **Ricky Harrison** defeated **Roger Anderson** & **K.C. Thunder.**
(04-07-00)

—Beth Lawler

WISCONSIN

HOWARD—All-Star Championship Wrestling's "Spring Fever 2000" at the Watering Hole: **Derrick St. Holmes** beat **Judge Jesse** ... **Ice Walters** beat **Col. Corruption** by disqualification ... **Matt Longtime** & **Travis Lee** defeated **Brad** & **Eric Hammer** ... **Eric Freedom** defeated **Medallion** ... **Big Daddy Loker** beat **Cujo** in a dog-collar match ... **Mike Mercury** & **Horace the Psychopath** defeated **Adrian Lynch** & **Rockin' Randy** ... **Rob Norwood** beat **Adam Pearce** and **Dino Bambino** in a three-way dance.
(04-21-00)

—Dominick Valenti

INTERNATIONAL

CANADA

TORONTO, ONTARIO—Apocalypse Wrestling Federation at Cactus Pete's: **Scotty Blaze** pinned **Franky the Mobster** ... **Sinn** defeated **Jaguar Vijay Singh** ... **Mysterious Mayhem** beat **Jim Fury** ... **David Diamond** defeated **Tony Mac** by disqualification ... **The All Knighters** beat **Access Denied** ... Heavyweight champion **El Fuego** defeated **The Squeegee Kid** ... **Jason Sensation** beat **Ms. B. Haven.**
(04-16-00)

—Jacques Charbonneau

KOREA

CAMP CARROLL—NWA Mid-Atlantic/World Wide Wrestling Alliance at Camp Carroll: **The American Eagle** beat **Chris Hamrick** ... **Rikki Nelson** defeated **Madd Maxx** by disqualification ... **Strawberry Fields** beat **Leilani Kai** ... **The Bushwhackers** defeated **The Slovaks** ... **Drake Dawson** & **Curtis Thompson** beat **L.A. Stephens** & **Big Bubba Bain** ... **Sgt. Craig Pittman** defeated **Bunkhouse Buck** ... **The Rock 'n' Roll Express** defeated NWA tag team champions **Steven Dunn** & **Jackie Fulton** (who was taking the place of an injured **Reno Riggins**) to win the title.
(04-12-00)

—Dan Parris

PUERTO RICO

PONCE—WWF at Estadio Paquito Montaner: **Essa Rios** & **Lita** defeated **Shan Hill** & **Andres Borges** ... **Jesus Cristobal** beat **Fidel Sierra** ... **Pain** beat **Giant Silva** ... **Nuevo Gran Apollo** defeated **Andy Anderson** ... **Shane the Glamour Boy** defeated **Ricky Santana** ... **Chicky Starr** & **Victor the Bodyguard** beat **Miguel Perez Jr.** & **Jesus Castillo Jr.** for the IWA tag team title ... **Ricky Banderas** beat **Steve Bradley** ... **Tiger Ali Singh** defeated **Val Venis** ... **The Rock** & **Kane** beat **The Dudley Boyz** (**Savio Vega** was the guest referee).
(04-28-00)

—Jesus Satama

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY
OCTOBER

CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES—Professional wrestling at the Olympic Auditorium: **Ripper Collins** and **Mr. Moto** wrestled to a draw ... **The Hangman** beat **Larry Evans** ... **Chris Beskeas** defeated **The Alaskan** ... **The Destroyer** beat **Wild Bill Cody** ... **Ray Stevens** defeated **Red Bastien** in a best-of-three-falls match.
(10-09-64)

—PWI archives

MASSACHUSETTS

BOSTON—WWWF at Boston Garden: **The Russians** defeated **Mike Pappas** & **Manuel Soto** ... **Rene Goulet** and **Mike Monroe** wrestled to a draw ... **Karl Gotch** beat **The Black Demon** ... **Victor Rivera** defeated **Beautiful Bobby** ... **Chief Jay Strongbow** and **Stan Stasiak** wrestled to a no-contest ... World tag team champions **Tarzan Tyler** & **Luke Graham** defeated **Gorilla Monsoon** & **Haystacks Calhoun** by disqualification ... World champion **Pedro Morales** and **Jimmy Valiant** wrestled to a no-contest.
(10-15-71)

—PWI archives

NEW YORK

NEW YORK—WWF at Madison Square Garden: **Tony Garea** beat **Larry Zbyszko** by disqualification ... **The Hangman** defeated **Rick McGraw** ... **Dominic DeNucci** pinned **Larry Sharpe** ... **Terry Taylor** beat **Jose Estrada** ... **Rene Goulet** defeated **Johnny Rodz** ... Intercontinental champion **Ken Patera** and **Pedro Morales** wrestled to a draw ... **Sgt. Slaughter** defeated World champion **Bob Backlund** by disqualification.
(10-20-80)

—PWI archives

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ringside

(Continued from page 9)

Sgt. Slaughter tries to put Kurt Angle to sleep with the cobra clutch. Slaughter, who has been both a fan favorite and rulebreaker during his wrestling career, thinks Angle is ready to hear the cheers of WWF crowds.

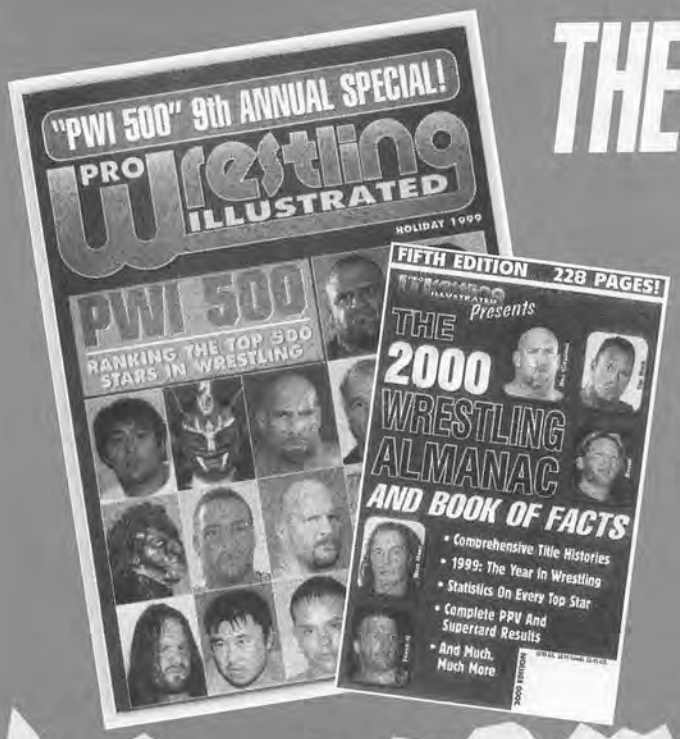
former WWF World champion **Sgt. Slaughter.**

"When I stepped through the ropes with Angle for our boot camp match a few months ago, I knew the kid had some issues," said Slaughter. "I think I know what they are, too. They were the same as mine when I made the mistake of partnering with **The Iron Sheik** during the Gulf War. The fans hated me, and though I initially thought I was doing the best thing for my career at the time, I couldn't stand to hear the boos of the crowd. Angle is the same way. Like me, he is a bona fide American hero. But every week he walks out in front of an American crowd and gets booed like he's **Saddam Hussein**. It has to be tough on the kid, and I wouldn't be surprised to see him change his approach."

Angel of **Da Baldies** has promised to exact revenge on **New Jack**, **Nova**, and **Chris Chetti** following **New Jack's** mugging of **DeVito** at Hardcore Heaven.

"You saw what New Jack did to DeVito, Pah-Pah, and you saw Nova and Chetti hold me back from killin' New Jack," Angel told me following the pay-per-view. "I had to watch while New Jack used every weapon at his disposal to open DeVito up, and I couldn't do a damn thing to stop it. I don't know what Nova and Chetti were thinkin', but I'll tell you this, Pah-Pah, Da Baldies and Angel are looking to make them boys into memories."

That's it for me this month, fans. Until you hear from me in the November issue, look for me at ringside. ☐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(Continued from page 21)

keeping the belt. There's more to it than that, however.

"When Van Dam injured his ankle in January, he was on the verge of getting shots at Mike Awesome for the World title," said *ECW On TNN* color commentator Joel Gertner. "I'm pretty confident those shots will still be offered when RVD comes back full-time, especially considering there's no friendship there between him and Justin Credible. Rhino is pretty smart. If Van Dam comes back and wins the World title right now, Rhino's already first in line for a title shot. If Van Dam comes back to prove Rhino wrong, The Network has a chance to embarrass Van Dam one-on-one. Either way, Rhino and The Network win."

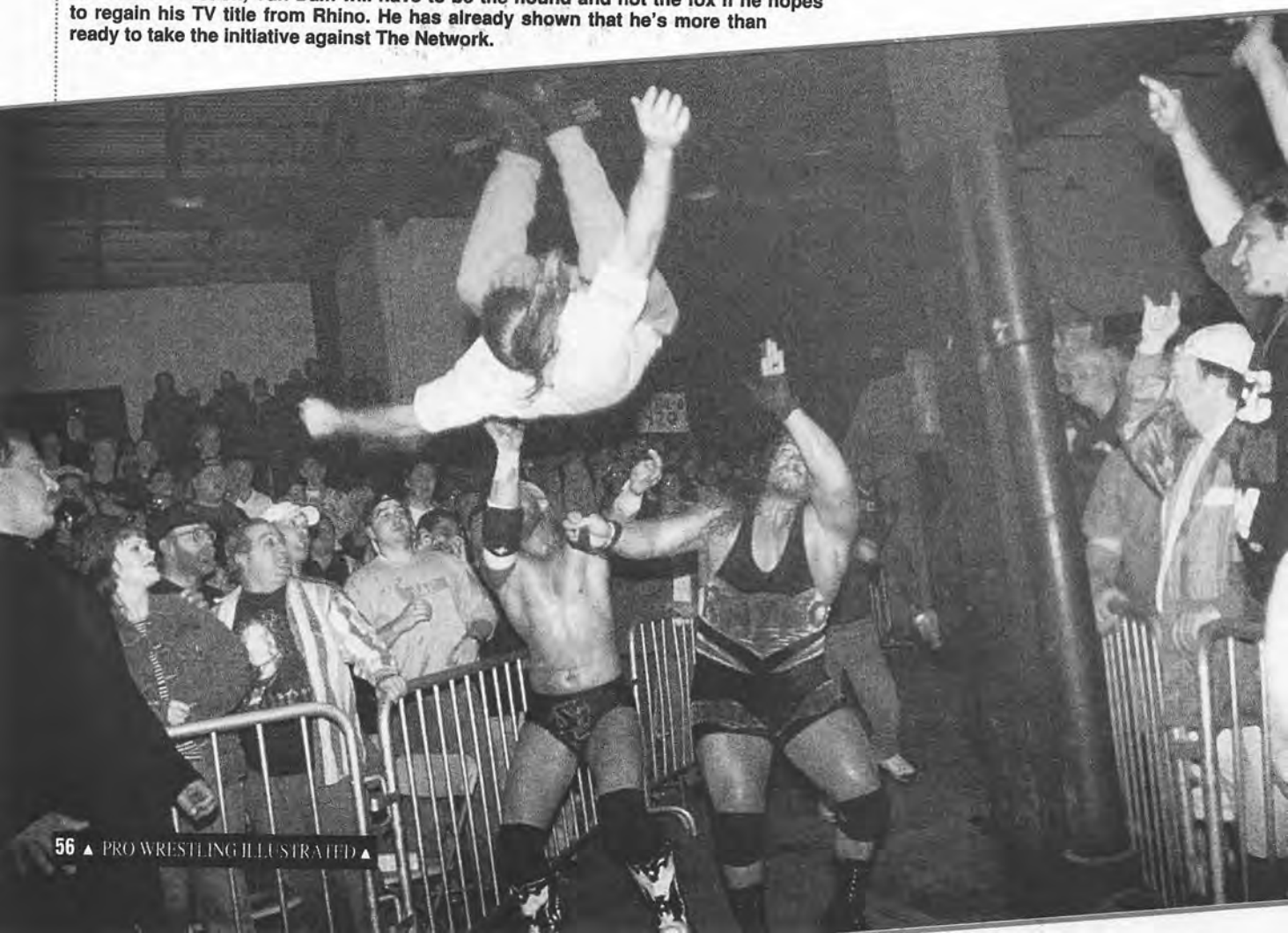
There's an age-old axiom in wrestling that a champion is only as good as the contenders he faces. A title earns prestige based on how the man holding it fares against his top contenders. By those criteria, Van Dam's TV title has been the most prestigious title in ECW. Could anyone else have turned back Sabu like Van Dam did throughout 1998 and 1999? Could anyone else have dominated Bam Bam Bigelow, Chris Candido, and Jerry Lynn like Van Dam did? And if so, could they have done it while simultaneously defending the tag team title against teams like The Dudley Boyz for four months like RVD did?

Of course, none of this matters to Rhino and Corino. And even though Van Dam knows he's being provoked, he can't resist the urge to destroy his critics, to defend his legacy. Again, though, we have to wonder: Why didn't Van Dam step up earlier? The Ultimate Warrior first won the WWF World title when he held the Intercontinental title. Ditto for Goldberg with the U.S. title in WCW. Can it be that Rhino's verbal slap hurts so badly because ... it contains a grain of truth?

"Rob Van Dam doesn't have to answer that, especially not to some twerp reporter at *PWI,*" Bill Alfonso tersely snapped.

For once, we're content with Van Dam's reluctance to speak. After all, this is a question that should be answered in the ring. Rhino has put Van Dam in a position in which he *must* challenge for the World title. If he doesn't, maybe The Network was right all along. □

Now back in action, Van Dam will have to be the hound and not the fox if he hopes to regain his TV title from Rhino. He has already shown that he's more than ready to take the initiative against The Network.



(Continued from page 34)

Scott and Rick won the WWF World tag title in 1993 (above left). Back then, Rick had the more dominant personality, although Scott, tossing Jacques Rougeau (above right), did possess the amazing power he still has today.

Talking has become an integral part of WWF's *Raw*. The Rock and Triple-H spend more time jawing at each other than they do wrestling. Certainly, most fans know that The Rock's signature moves are the Rock bottom and the people's elbow ... but more fans know "what The Rock is cookin'" and the directions to the Smackdown Hotel. When WWF superstars talk, people listen.

Scott Steiner could have been one of those superstars. In retrospect, considering McMahon's amazing record with finding and developing talent, it's amazing that he isn't still in the WWF. But in the mid-1990s, McMahon and the WWF were in a bit of a slump. The federation was losing major talent on seemingly a weekly basis. The young stars coming in seemed to be years away from reaching their potential. And Steiner wasn't nearly as flamboyant as he is now. Although the Steiners were loved by many fans, Rick was the more charismatic of the brothers. Scott seemed to be a no-nonsense guy and a tag team specialist.

"That's because nobody gave me the chance to speak my mind," Scott said. "I had to make my own opportunities, because nobody was handing me a damn thing. What you're seeing now is purely the creation of Scott Steiner. Nothing was ever given to me."

A skeptic could argue that "Big Poppa Pump" stands out in WCW because there are so few wrestlers in the federation with as much charisma. Perhaps he wouldn't be as obvious in the WWF. Still, you have to wonder whether McMahon ever turns a jealous eye to WCW and says to himself, "We should've at least kept that guy."

The fact is, he should have. □

In WCW, Steiner likes to surround himself with sexy ladies, grab a microphone, and regale viewers with tales of his romantic forays. Sounds like he's better suited for WWF TV. Vince McMahon had a chance to make Scott a star in the early-'90s, but Scott was a different person then.

(Continued from page 27)

right man to be in the position he's in.

KREWDA: Fill us in on the back injury and explain to us why you can no longer do what you used to do.

MICHAELS: I had two disks that were completely destroyed. They went in and fused one of them. They pull a disk out, take a bone out of your hip, put that in, and make one solid bone there. The disk below that was also messed up, but they didn't want to operate there because people my age usually don't get surgery and you don't want to do any more than you have to. They only wanted to do one since I was 33 at the time. The disk below the herniation is herniated and the two disks above it are herniated, so in time, when I'm older, there's a good chance I'll have to go in there and fuse a couple of the other ones. I've already lost five to 10 percent motion in my back. I can't bend it because it's solid bone. Somehow, being at home and training to get back, I herniated the two above it. If I try to wrestle again and take a bump, there's a good chance I could destroy something like a nerve, and if you hit a nerve or cut a nerve, you lose your feet and legs.

KREWDA: At what point were you certain that your in-ring career was over?

MICHAELS: I was pretty certain before I went into the last match with Steve Austin at WrestleMania XV. The doctor told me I was done, but I'd heard that before. They told me that when I blew my knee out, but I wrestled on that for years. I had a good idea that this match would put me over the edge. Going in, the doctors didn't want me doing it, but I had to, obviously, for many reasons. When I came out and tried to go through rehab for a full year before getting the surgery, about halfway through that, when I hadn't made any progress, I realized I was done. Once you get the surgery, there's no way you can go back. I suppose somebody could, but for once I wanted to use my head instead of my heart.

***Nitro* Girl Whisper blows a kiss to the camera a few months before she was to become Mrs. Rebecca Hickenbottom. Shawn and Rebecca are the proud parents of a baby boy named Cameron Cade.**

KREWDA: Marriage and fatherhood occurred right after your retirement. Did your desire to start a family influence your decision to retire?

MICHAELS: No. That was a decision I had made long before I ever met Rebecca. After that WrestleMania, I took some time off to heal. Then I tried two or three months later to go through the physical therapy. Come September, I knew I was going to have that surgery, because I just wasn't progressing. Really, I had made the comment to people after the match that I was done.

KREWDA: Did you make that comment to friends or to the WWF?

MICHAELS: To friends. In fact, the WWF, to this day, I think still thinks in the back of their minds, *Maybe he'll get the itch, maybe he'll do one more.*

KREWDA: You can get the itch all day long, but if you can't bend over, you can't scratch it, right?

MICHAELS: Exactly. They always ask me that, but I don't get the itch. The itch will never come back. Once you make that decision and you believe in it and you know it's the right one, the itch is gone.

KREWDA: Do you still get the desire to be a part of The Show?

MICHAELS: I could have it. But do I miss it? No, not a bit.

KREWDA: In professional wrestling, business can become personal, as it did for you and a member of WCW. Of course, your lovely wife Rebecca was formerly known as Whisper of the *Nitro* Girls. Did anyone from either organization object to the fact that you were romantically linked to the competition?

MICHAELS: Everybody from the WWF was very supportive. Unfortunately, I can't say the same thing about WCW. One time, I went to visit her in Atlanta, and I was leaving to go to Europe to do a press tour. Lo and behold, she's walking me into the airport and we're standing in line and she just starts laughing, and I said, "What are you laughing at?" I could see her looking beyond me, so I turn around and there's Eric Bischoff staring right at us. He was going on his vacation to Paris. The two of us just started laughing, and he just turned his head and started shaking it. I called her a couple days later and found out he'd taken her off everything—live TV, taped. She wasn't allowed to do this, that, or the other. So then she went to him and said, "Look, I'd like to ask for my notice. I'm marrying Shawn, and I'd like to get out." He said, "No. I'll die before I let you go." He wouldn't release her because he was convinced of the fact that I was gonna take her to the WWF and put her on our TV. Then I talked to Kevin Nash and said, "Look, the last thing I want is her in the wrestling business. I don't want her working for you, and I sure as hell

Some early influences on Michaels' career included Marty Jannetty, with whom he won the AWA World tag team title as The Midnight Rockers (above), and Jose Lothario, who served briefly as his mentor/trainer (right).

don't want her working for us. She's gonna be my wife, the mother of my child. I want a family with this girl." So he tried to talk to Eric a little bit. Then she went to him again, and he suspended her contract. He let her go, but she was still under contract because he was so afraid that our motivation to do this was to put her on WWF television, and we couldn't convince the guy that the last thing I wanted was my wife being involved in the wrestling business. It wasn't until Bill Busch came on board that we called up and said, "Look, she's eight months pregnant, for God's sake; she's not going to be involved in the wrestling business, so let her out of her contract." They finally did it.

KREWDA: You trained under Jose Lothario. How much of what he taught you do you pass on to your students at the Shawn Michaels Wrestling Academy?

MICHAELS: None of it. I say none of it because I only trained with him for about a month-and-a-half. I couldn't really grasp anything except for the Hindu squats and stuff like that. Jose learned a different way and taught a different way. The wrestling business was very different back when I started, so I wasn't able to apply any of that, and it wasn't because of any personal feelings. I had a pretty good idea of what I was doing before I started training.

KREWDA: Were you self-taught?

MICHAELS: What people referred to me as when I first broke in was a natural.

KREWDA: Jose is portrayed as your mentor. Was your association more legend than fact?

MICHAELS: Well, that was my way of paying respect to him. Whether we spent intense hours in the gym training or not, he's still the guy who took the time. He was a wrestler. He didn't have to take the time. When he was wrestling down in Houston, he'd take me with him, and I'd watch those matches. I don't want to sell Jose short; it's just that the organized training we have now is very different. I think Jose deserves more credit just for being an old-timer and saying "yes" instead of, "Who's this punk?"

KREWDA: If a wrestling hopeful wants to try out at your school, what does he or she have to do?

MICHAELS: They would have to send $5, certified check or money order, to P.O. Box 461348, San Antonio, Texas 78246 or get the info off the Web site which is coming out: HBK.com.

KREWDA: What's the first thing an applicant can look forward to if they are accepted in your camp?

MICHAELS: We spend the first two or three weeks doing nothing but cardio. That's simply because if you're not in shape, you're gonna hurt somebody. In my opinion, this business doesn't get enough credit for the guys being in such shape as they are. I don't think a lot of people understand the work that goes into what they see on TV. A lot of young kids come in thinking they're gonna learn what they see on TV, and it's very different than that, especially in the beginning stage. They go through a great deal of cardio in the first couple of weeks. Then we teach how a match transpires. Your basics: locking up, headlocks, takeovers, headscissors, then comebacks, grabbing an arm and twisting it, fireman's carry, headscissors, kickouts, and coming back up. It sounds easy, but actually it takes a lot of time to teach kids how to lock up correctly. So we teach the moves, reversals for all the moves, all the basic wrestling holds you might see at the beginning of a match. Then we move it into tackles and hiptosses and slowly build it up from there. The one thing I've learned from teaching all this is that I don't know the names of any wrestling holds. I've wrestled for 16 years and can't name the holds.

KREWDA: You must have read my mind, because my next question was what have you learned about the instruction and promotion ends that you didn't know as a wrestler?

MICHAELS: Oh, man, I don't even want to get into the promotion end *(laughs)*. The teaching ... I know how to do 'em all, but I couldn't tell you the name of 'em. Half my kids ask me, "Do you want me to do a huracanrana?" and I say, "Is that the thing where you jump up and reverse monkey flip the guy?" "You want me to do a plancha, this, that ..." Yeah, whatever. My first class, they had to keep teaching me the names of the moves, because they've all changed. Now you got the dragonsault, dragon driver, I don't know ...

KREWDA: Your school is feeding talent to Japan, ECW, and the WWF. Are there any blue-chippers we can expect to see soon?

MICHAELS: Well, we haven't sent anyone to ECW yet, but we're certainly working on it. There are guys who I think are ready. There's a lot of red tape since I'm still under contract to the WWF. I could easily get guys in WCW or ECW, but contractually, I have to let the WWF have first right of refusal. Four of my guys—Lance Cade, Shooter Schultz, Brian Danielson, and Spanky—have developmental deals, and two of my guys—a tag team called the Board of Education, Reuben Cruz and Jeremy Sage—have a tryout today.

KREWDA: When a student comes to your academy, how much are they counting on your relationship with the WWF to get them in the business?

MICHAELS: Initially, they probably weren't. After the word got out, there probably have been some, but the thing is, guys who come for that reason never make it.

KREWDA: Of course not. They're looking for a shortcut.

MICHAELS: Right. The one thing I did learn in the wrestling business is how to pay attention to some guy who's lazier than hell. Vince taught me a lot about that kind of stuff. I can detect that. The funny thing is, they usually weed themselves out. I do have to say this for our school: We get a lot of good kids. We've yet to get anyone in here who thinks his [crap] didn't stink or he was big and bad. I know it's eventually gonna end *(laughs)*, but I've gotten some really great kids.

KREWDA: I think that along with all the mainstream inside exposure professional wrestling has received recently, the message that it requires tremendous physical sacrifice and dedication has also gotten through.

MICHAELS: I agree with you that it's more respected than it was a long time ago.

KREWDA: When we see a graduate of the Shawn Michaels Wrestling Academy, what will be the first thing we notice about him? His mat skills, his aerial ability, his fundamentals?

MICHAELS: I think we're gonna cover all of the above. The first four guys I gave the WWF: Two guys can fly around anywhere, another is a real big guy, 6'5", 250, 18 years old, who can do a lot of big man stuff and jump around. Then I gave them Schultz, a good mat guy.

KREWDA: I read an Internet report that stated that the academy was in financial straits due to an injury incurred by a student there. Is that accurate?

Two of Shawn's students have at it at the Shawn Michaels Wrestling Academy in San Antonio, Texas. Michaels has already supplied the WWF with several young wrestlers and plans to do the same for ECW and WCW.

MICHAELS: That's very inaccurate. The school was never in financial anything, but a student did get injured. He spent a lot of time in the hospital and he progressed here, but to progress more, I felt he needed to go home, so I chartered a Medivac jet and flew him and his family back to Britain. We just found out the other day that he's looking around and calling out his brother's name. It was a very hard time for me and my students. I looked away for a split-second and, apparently from what everyone says, he didn't take a bad bump. We don't know if it was something that was pre-existing or what.

KREWDA: What was his condition?

MICHAELS: When he left, he couldn't move his legs. Last we heard, he had some movement back, and he was speaking. When we first went in there, they said he was brain dead. They didn't think he was gonna make it. Quite honestly, it gets you in touch with your religious side. Through prayers and the support all the students, my family, and his family gave him, he did tremendous while he was here. From what I understand, he's continuing to get better. While he was here, he got brain function back. He was looking around. He could see, but he couldn't speak and couldn't move his legs.

KREWDA: How did the injury occur? Did he go over on his head?

MICHAELS: He took a backdrop, but everyone said he didn't land on his head. They said he landed high up on his shoulders. That's what no one understood. Then his dad said maybe it was something that was pre-existing that we didn't know of. I heard stories that he'd been piledriven, but none of that happened. He took a backdrop a minute before that, a perfect one, two guys asked me a question, I turned around, and apparently he took another one, and again, he didn't land on his head. When the guy covered him, we said, "Kick out!" and he kicked out. Then he said

something to the guy, and all of a sudden he went out. I hate even recalling that day. But he's speaking, he's moving his legs, and he's coherent now.

KREWDA: What was your reaction when Owen Hart died?

MICHAELS: Mine was like everyone else's. I was sad. At the time, I was in Hawaii taping *Pacific Blue,* and I came off the set one day and the producer asked me, "Did you hear about Owen? It was on CNN that he fell and died." I was just stunned. My wife and I went up to our room and called my parents, and they said they had heard about it. My parents don't get the pay-per-view unless their son's on it. We didn't know anything. Then the next night, we watched the show, the tribute to him, and I'm sure like a lot of people that night, cried throughout the whole thing. My wife, who had never even met the man, was crying. It was a very moving show. Owen was a great guy. We had great matches together. He was funny, and everybody got along with Owen. I thought it was a credit to him as a human being that the wrestling industry could put on a two-hour show around him, because I don't think the wrestling industry could do that with any other guy.

KREWDA: Do you intend to follow through with your promise to shut down your Web site if inaccurate and hurtful rumors persist about your family and students on the Internet?

MICHAELS: I just told the WWF to close my stuff down. I just don't think it's fair. These boys are gonna have a hard enough time just getting into the wrestling business.

KREWDA: Was shutting down related to the rumors surrounding the injured student?

MICHAELS: No. I have a couple of freakazoid stalkers here in San Antonio.

KREWDA: Speaking of freakazoid fans, what's the real story on that inheritance you received from a fan a few years ago?

MICHAELS: Never happened. That was one of the best ones ever,

The Heartbreak Kid returned to the ring for one night in April and defeated Venom to retain the Texas Wrestling Alliance title. He put the belt up in a tournament the next day. We may see HBK on TV but he assures us his wrestling days are over.

though. What happened was, I came to a show in Canada one night, and George Steele came to me and said, "You just inherited a bunch of money." I said, "What?" It turns out there are these two guys who are sick and they're in this cancer hospital and they're big fans, and they wanted to leave me all this money. I met one of them. One guy passed away. It sounded like a real thing, so my dad went there one time and met him, and he wanted to leave us all this stuff. I didn't want anything, and I wanted him to use whatever money or items he had to finish paying for his treatment. Eventually, whatever it was he was gonna leave me, his hospital bills ate away at it. And the best part of all is he's still alive. So I think it was just a big work to try to meet me. The only inheritance I ever got was the money I made myself.

KREWDA: We have a reader who sends us letters saying you got her pregnant a couple of times ...

MICHAELS: A couple of times *(laughs).* That's also why I don't miss wrestling. But this stuff on the Net just happened a couple of weeks ago. We were just getting very negative comments about my wrestlers and my students, and then we started getting negative comments about my wife and my child.

KREWDA: What were these people saying?

MICHAELS: I'd prefer not to get into it, but things you just don't say to people. Things you wouldn't say to your worst enemy. I called the WWF and told them to shut my board down, and I just shut my one here down. Like I said, these boys, if they're lucky enough to get into the wrestling business, they'll worry about it then. But people say things because they are associated with me, and that's unfair. If people want to bash me, that's fine. But you don't say things about a three-month-old baby boy who doesn't know any better. You don't make comments about my wife. She wasn't even in the industry. She danced on TV on Monday nights. That hardly puts you in the wrestling business. You don't do that stuff because they married me, or they happen to be my son, or they happen to be my students. It's uncalled for, so I just told them to shut everything down.

KREWDA: How do you want to be remembered by your fans?

MICHAELS: I would like to go down as one of the top performers. Judge my career by what I put on the tube, or on pay-per-view, or Monday nights, or whatever show we ran at the time. I'd want to be known as the guy who went out there regardless of what was or wasn't going on in the back and performed to the best of his ability, concentrated on the most important thing in the wrestling business, and that is the performance for the people. I did that for three different entities: the WWF, the fans, and me. As long as I made those three entities happy, all the rest is irrelevant. □

the JAPAN REPORT

By Mike Spillane

TRAGEDY STRUCK NEW Japan Pro Wrestling once again as up-and-comer **Masakazu Fukuda** died at the age of 27 on April 19. Knocked unconscious during a match, Fukuda, who had been fully cleared to wrestle just the day before by a New Japan physician, entered a coma-like state and was rushed to a nearby hospital. His condition deteriorated until he died.

Apparently a tumor in Fukuda's brain, which had absorbed some blood from previous injuries, swelled during the match and proved to be a fatal complication.

The entire New Japan roster attended Fukuda's funeral, as did other members of the *puroresu* community, most notably **Hiroshi Hase**, a former New Japan star who now competes for rival organization All-Japan. Hase had his own brush with a similar tragedy when a young student of his died just a few years ago.

In a gesture of sympathy, New Japan Pro Wrestling paid for all of the proceedings, but even that has not been enough to save the company from harsh scrutiny in the media. Everyone from New Japan doctors to President **Tatsumi Fujinami** has been lambasted in the wake of this tragic incident.

Photo by Koichi Yoshizawa

FMW is hoping the "return" of Hayabusa will rekindle interest in the promotion. Since he shed his mask, FMW's TV ratings have been down.

Fukuda, who wore simple black trunks and often sported a half-grown beard, impressed a lot of people in the 1998 "Best Of The Super Junior" tournament by going head-to-head with top New Japan junior heavyweights **Koji Kanemoto** and **Tatsuhito Takaiwa**.

Fukuda was a skilled submission wrestler who used swift Greco-Roman takedowns and martial arts throws and had only just begun to make an impact in New Japan rings.

The 2000 "Best Of The Super Junior" is taking shape, but New Japan's hopes of infusing some new blood have been dashed by WCW executives. Originally, **Juventud Guerrera** and **Billy Kidman** were scheduled to square off against perennial favorites such as **Jushin Liger**, **El Samurai**, and many others. However, as WCW's television ratings continued to sink, creative head **Vince Russo** decided to keep Kidman and Guerrera here in the United States on a full-time basis. Russo and New Japan have never had a great relationship, dating back to Russo's first WCW tour of duty, when he scheduled defenses of Liger's IWGP junior heavyweight title without New Japan's consent. Regardless of the last-minute decision by WCW, the round-robin tournament begins in early-summer.

It was just last August when FMW promoted "Final **Hayabusa**," the last match to feature **Eiji Ezaki** in the costume and mask that made him a legend. The next time he appeared in the ring, Ezaki was simply called **H** and had dispensed with the look his fans had come to recognize. Sporting torn jean shorts and with his hair dyed blue, this new incarnation seemed like a poor substitute for the old. FMW ratings and attendance figures began to sink, due as much to the demise of Hayabusa as to the rise of **Fuyuki**, a much less marketable personality.

Ezaki, who had hoped that the new look would help fans accept his new ring style, realizes now that he may have no choice but to adopt the high-risk style he left behind in August 1999. With a rising disinterest in the current batch of stars, Ezaki has once again donned the costume of Hayabusa for special events, trying to steer his new wrestling style in the direction of his old one.

Although he is nicknamed "Superstar," a moniker indicating his selfish and egotistical attitude, the return of Hayabusa has managed to spark some interest in FMW, which has been a consistent ratings loser over the last six months. Hayabusa might be FMW's last chance to save itself from television cancellation.

Soo da, sayonara! □

the MEXICO REPORT

By Janeth LaRuda

PRIOR TO LEAVING for TripleMania in Japan, AAA announced it would finally be returning to Southern California for three shows later this year. A few years ago, AAA was outdrawing both WCW and WWF in Los Angeles (it still holds the all-time attendance record for wrestling at the L.A. Sports Arena), and the resurgence in interest in Lucha in the U.S. has inspired this return.

Vatos Locos leader **May Flowers** recently broke his wrist. During his absence, youngster **Espiritu** was brought up in his place. With his **Ace Frehley**-ish look—Frehley is the lead guitarist for Kiss—Espiritu was a natural selection and slid perfectly into the slot. Flowers' absence has also given **Charly Manson** the opportunity to step into the leadership role of Vatos Locos—one of AAA's top stables—and Manson is taking full advantage of the situation. However, don't be surprised to see this one take a twist with Manson possibly joining LLL during or after TripleMania, once Flowers returns.

Speaking of LLL, **Cibernetico** has seemingly become the fountain of youth for AAA. At only 25, he is spending more and more time battling veterans like **Pierroth** and **Perro Aguayo**—and he's currently in a heated feud with **El Canek**.

If you have not had a chance to check it out yet, take a look at IWRG if you can. This young group operating out of Arena Naucalpan may be best known for its partnership with **Ultimo Dragon's** Toryumon workers, but its home talent should not be overlooked. Featuring many of the stars of CMLL—along with its own core talent of workers such as **Dr. Cerebro**, **Micke Segura** (formerly AAA's **Super Nova** and Promo Azteca's **Oro Jr.**), **Los Officiales**, **Fantasy**, and **Star Boy**—IWRG is on the rise and makes a great case for just how talented Mexico's lesser-known indy workers really are.

"Exotica Extraordinaire" Pimpinella Escarlotta recently made his IWRG debut. With his flamboyant personality and incredible ring skills, "Pimpi" is sure to make a huge impact very quickly. Also making recent debuts were **Alan Stone** and **Moto-Cross**, who were soon joined by their older brother, WCW's **Super Calo**.

Much to the surprise of Lucha fans everywhere, Blue Panther (pictured), Black Warrior, and Dr. Wagner Jr. have been defending the CMLL trios title on a regular basis.

Champions, champions, everywhere new champions ... Dr. Cerebro has defeated **Ultimo Vampiro** for the IWRG Intercontinental welterweight title ... **Los Villanos** defeated Los Officiales for the IWRG trios title ... The WWA minis title re-emerged for the first time in years when **Piratita Morgan** successfully defended it against **Octagoncito**.

During his absence from ECW, **Super Crazy** made his debut at Arena Mexico, where he seconded **Dr. Wagner**. It'll be interesting to see where this leads, as CMLL still seems intent on keeping the younger talent on the undercard.

Perro Aguayo's last years in AAA were kept interesting thanks to his feuds with the young lions. His time in CMLL could be used to elevate teams such as **Las Guapos** and **Los Nuevos Infernales**, but CMLL seems intent on keeping him in pairings against other veterans such as **Los Dinamitas**.

The CMLL trios title is seeing plenty of action this year, as holders **Dr. Wagner Jr.**, **Black Warrior**, and **Blue Panther** are actually working together in defense of it. One of the strangest aspects of Lucha Libre is how infrequently titles are actually defended. Titles often go months without being defended—or even seen.

Auditorio de Tijuana recently saw a record gate, as **Nicho el Millonario** (WCW's **Psicosis**) defeated **Rey Misterio Sr.**, his former teacher—and the man who took his mask last year—in a hair vs. hair match. Prior to the match, Nicho announced that if he lost, he would retire. Interference from the likes of **Halloween**, **Damian**, and **Lady Victoria** nearly cost Nicho the match, but **Konnan** was able to come to the rescue and help Nicho get a key win in this long-running feud.

Back next month with more from the land of Lucha. □

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

TOP 10

1 JUSTIN CREDIBLE
227, Waterbury, CT
(–) ECW World champion

2 KENSUKE SASAKI
233, Tokyo, Japan
(4) IWGP heavyweight champion

3 KENTA KOBASHI
261, Tokyo, Japan
(1) All-Japan Triple Crown champion

4 THE ROCK
272, Miami, FL
(9) No. 2 contender: WWF World title

5 JEFF JARRETT
230, Nashville, TN
(3) No. 2 contender: WCW World title

6 CHRIS BENOIT
218, Edmonton, Alberta
(6) WWF Intercontinental champion

7 SCOTT STEINER
275, Detroit, MI
(7) WCW U.S. champion

8 TRIPLE-H
284, Greenwich, CT
(2) WWF World champion

9 DALLAS PAGE
260, Point Pleasant, NJ
(–) No. 3 contender: WCW World title

10 RHINO
285, Detroit, MI
(–) ECW TV champion

Justin Credible

TAG TEAMS

1 YUJI NAGATA & MANABU NAKANISHI
Combined weight: 455 pounds
(3) IWGP International tag team champions

2 CHRISTIAN & EDGE
Combined weight: 465 pounds
(1) WWF World tag team champions

3 KRONIC
Combined weight: 622 pounds
(–) WCW World tag team champions

4 BUH BUH RAY & D-VON DUDLEY
Combined weight: 585 pounds
(5) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title

5 CHRIS CHETTI & NOVA
Combined weight: 454 pounds
(8) No. 1 contenders: ECW World tag title

6 TOO COOL
Combined weight: 433 pounds
(–) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title

7 DANNY DORING & ROADKILL
Combined weight: 533 pounds
(–) No. 2 contenders: ECW World tag title

8 TEST & ALBERT
Combined weight: 642 pounds
(–) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

9 BUFF BAGWELL & SHANE DOUGLAS
Combined weight: 495 pounds
(4) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

10 C.W. ANDERSON & BILL WILES
Combined weight: 487 pounds
(–) No. 3 contenders: ECW World tag title

WCW

World Champion:
RIC FLAIR
(9) 243, Charlotte, NC

1—SCOTT STEINER
(1) 275, Detroit, MI
2—JEFF JARRETT
(C) 230, Nashville, TN
3—DALLAS PAGE
(2) 260, Point Pleasant, NJ
4—STING
(4) 260, Venice Beach, CA
5—HULK HOGAN
(7) 275, Venice Beach, CA
6—VAMPIRO
(5) 220, Thunder Bay, Ontario
7—KEVIN NASH
(–) 356, Detroit, MI
8—TERRY FUNK
(10) 247, Amarillo, TX
9—LEX LUGER
(3) 275, Chicago, IL
10—BILLY KIDMAN
(–) 195, Allentown, PA

WWF

World Champion:
TRIPLE-H
(C) 284, Greenwich, CT

1—CHRIS BENOIT
(1) 218, Edmonton, Alberta
2—THE ROCK
(3) 272, Miami, FL
3—CHRIS JERICHO
(4) 225, Winnipeg, Manitoba
4—EDDIE GUERRERO
(6) 221, El Paso, TX
5—RIKISHI PHATU
(8) 421, San Francisco, CA
6—THE BIG SHOW
(10) 500, Atlanta, GA
7—DEAN MALENKO
(–) 216, Tampa, FL
8—CRASH HOLLY
(9) 225, Mobile, AL
9—SCOTTY TOO HOTTY
(7) 203, Westbrook, ME
10—PERRY SATURN
(–) 237, Boston, MA

ECW

World Champion:
JUSTIN CREDIBLE
(–) 227, Waterbury, CT

1—RHINO
(3) 285, Detroit, MI
2—TOMMY DREAMER
(2) 265, Yonkers, NY
3—YOSHIHIRO TAJIRI
(1) 224, Tokyo, Japan
4—MASATO TANAKA
(–) 235, Tokyo, Japan
5—JERRY LYNN
(–) 224, Minneapolis, MN
6—LITTLE GUIDO
(6) 201, Howard Beach, NY
7—MIKEY WHIPWRECK
(–) 204, New York, NY
8—KID KASH
(7) 230, Johnson City, TN
9—NEW JACK
(–) 225, Philadelphia, PA
10—THE SANDMAN
(9) 244, Philadelphia, PA

NWA

NWA Champion:
NAOYA OGAWA
(C) 286, Tokyo, Japan

1—KEVIN NORTHCUTT
(9) 348, Chalmette, LA
2—GARY STEELE
(3) 241, London, England
3—CURTIS SLAMDAWG
(7) 222, Boston, MA
4—COLORADO KID
(1) 231, Colorado Springs, CO
5—KURRGAN
(5) 345, Hamilton, Ontario
6—BIG DON BRODIE
(8) 350, Jackson, MS
7—JUGGERNAUT
(6) 217, Fort Worth, TX
8—COLT STEELE
(4) 240, Charlotte, NC
9—RUKKUS
(2) 235, Atlanta, GA
10—TRACEY SMOTHERS
(–) 227, Atlanta, GA

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue. while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

For period ended May 21, 2000

ALL PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Frank Murdoch; 1—Donovan Morgan; 2—Hardcore Comini; 3—Ma'och; 4—Tony Jones; 5—Boyce LeGrande; 6—Vinny Massaro; 7—Robert Thompson; 8—Vance Vain; 9—Bison Smith; 10—Vanilla Frost.

BAD 2 THE BONE WRESTLING: Champion—Manslaughter; 1—The Regulator; 2—Mr. Corleone; 3—Bio-Hazard; 4—Psycho-Delic; 5—Todd Morton; 6—J.B. Thunder; 7—Alister Fear; 8—Josh Garrett; 9—Bill Lewis; 10—Ox Harley.

INDEPENDENT WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Twiggy Ramirez; 1—Biggie Biggs; 2—Kevin Knight; 3—Christian York; 4—Joey Matthews; 5—Steve Corino; 6—Nova; 7—Marc Verow; 8—Keith Conway; 9—Brad Scott; 10—Simon Diamond.

FAR NORTH WRESTLING: Champion—Dynamite Dean; 1—Bigg Playa; 2—T. Rantula; 3—Shirley Doe; 4—Seth James; 5—Cyrus Steele; 6—Dennis Gregory; 7—Lord Zoltan; 8—Toby Cline; 9—K.C. Hammer; 10—Milwaukee Mauler.

MASON DIXON WRESTLING: Champion—Mason Hunter; 1—Chick Scott; 2—Punchy McGee; 3—Latin Tornado; 4—Flemmo Guano; 5—Bob Brown; 6—Scotty McKeever; 7—Ox Thrillbilly; 8—Bounty Hunter; 9—Jamie Harris; 10—Lance Malinowski.

NORTHEAST WRESTLING: Champion—Dave Vicious; 1—Ralph Mosca; 2—King Kong Bundy; 3—Julio Fantastico; 4—The Patriot; 5—Christian York; 6—Joey Matthews; 7—Chris Candido; 8—John Diamond; 9—Xavier; 10—Gillberg.

OKLAHOMA PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING: Champion—Bull Schmitt; 1—Bolo; 2—Chief Red Eagle; 3—Renegade; 4—Rocco Valentino; 5—Splash Jackson; 6—Big Daddy Moore; 7—AWOL; 8—Ian St. James; 9—Ichiban; 10—Cousin Cooter.

RHODE ISLAND WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion—Wolverine; 1—Danger Boy Alfredo; 2—Pierre the Mountie; 3—Live Wire; 4—Danny Cama; 5—Max Brannigan; 6—Thrash; 7—Captain Maniac Cop; 8—The Intern; 9—Mael; 10—Bad News.

SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Scab; 1—Chrome; 2—Rick Link; 3—Uncle Tom Kettle; 4—Major DeBeers; 5—Kross; 6—Boris Dragoff; 7—Tears; 8—Aldo DeGama; 9—Stratus; 10—Preston Quinn.

SOUTHERN STATES WRESTLING: Champion—Tracey Smothers; 1—Chuck Jones; 2—War Machine; 3—Beau James; 4—Ricky Harrison; 5—Ron Ray; 6—K.C. Thunder; 7—Flex Armstrong; 8—Manny Fernandez; 9—Boris Dragoff; 10—Steve Flynn.

THUNDER WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Florida Hurricane; 1—Phantom; 2—Ghetto Superstar; 3—Johnnie Lee; 4—Dagon Briggs; 5—Ashe Corvan; 6—O'Callaghan; 7—Big Studd Hammer; 8—Michael Figgs; 9—Python; 10—Alexander Figgs.

WESTERN PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Title Vacant; 1—Brother Midnite; 2—Bobby Jay; 3—Shane Madison; 4—Bugsy Sluggliano; 5—Overkill; 6—Johnny Malibu; 7—Mentallo; 8—Will Damon; 9—Mike Myers; 10—Ronnie Attitude.

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:
KENSUKE SASAKI
(C) 251, Tokyo, Japan

1—JUSHIN LIGER
(1) 222, Hiroshima, Japan
2—NAOYA OGAWA
(4) 286, Tokyo, Japan
3—MASA CHONO
(2) 235, Tokyo, Japan
4—HIROYOSHI TENZAN
(6) 270, Tokyo, Japan
5—KEIJI MUTO
(3) 245, Yamanashi, Japan
6—SHINJIRO OTANI
(8) 215, Yokohama, Japan
7—KOJI KANEMOTO
(10) 205, Osaka, Japan
8—YUJI NAGATA
(–) 228, Tokyo, Japan
9—KENDO KA SHIN
(9) 195, Tokyo, Japan
10—SATOSHI KOJIMA
(5) 223, Tokyo, Japan

ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:
KENTA KOBASHI
(C) 282, Fukuchiyama, Japan

1—MITSUHARU MISAWA
(4) 228, Ashikaga, Japan
2—JUN AKIYAMA
(2) 225, Hiroshima, Japan
3—YOSHIHIRO TAKAYAMA
(6) 270, Sapporo, Japan
4—TAKAO OMORI
(1) 221, Tokyo, Japan
5—TOSHIAKI KAWADA
(3) 245, Ashikaga, Japan
6—YOSHINARI OGAWA
(5) 202, Fichigi, Japan
7—MAUNAKEA MOSSMAN
(–) 235, Honolulu, HI
8—AKIRA TAUE
(10) 265, Tokyo, Japan
9—MIKE BARTON
(–) 263, Austin, TX
10—STEVE WILLIAMS
(8) 265, Norman, OK

EMLL

EMLL Champion:
UNIVERSO DOS MIL
(C) 240, Mexico City, Mexico

1—PIERROTH JR.
(8) 251, Cuernavaca, Mexico
2—ZUMBIDO
(–) 183, Mexico City, Mexico
3—VILLANO III
(2) 220, Mexico City, Mexico
4—RAYO DE JALISCO JR.
(6) 270, Guadalajara, Mexico
5—NICHO EL MILLONARIO
(–) 200, Tijuana, Mexico
6—ATLANTIS
(3) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico
7—BLUE PANTHER
(1) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
8—NEGRO CASAS
(5) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
9—SCORPIO JR.
(–) 195, Nezahaulcoyotl, Mexico
10—EMILIO CHARLES JR.
(9) 222, Mexico City, Mexico

AAA

AAA Champion:
LATIN LOVER
(C) 190, Monterrey, Mexico

1—HECTOR GARZA
(5) 220, Monterrey, Mexico
2—HEAVY METAL
(4) 180, Mexico City, Mexico
3—PERRO AGUAYO JR.
(2) 165, Zacatecas, Mexico
4—CHARLY MANSON
(10) 221, Mexico City, Mexico
5—PERRO AGUAYO
(6) 220, Zacatecas, Mexico
6—CIBERNETICO
(8) 235, Mexico City, Mexico
7—BLUE DEMON JR.
(7) 180, Toluca, Mexico
8—ABISMO NEGRO
(1) 210, Pachua, Mexico
9—PIRATA MORGAN
(3) 221, Mexico City, Mexico
10—EL TEXANO
(9) 225, Mexico City, Mexico

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating over 200 wrestlers in 22 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important–and respected–ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

What does it mean to be a champion? There's no question that most major titles have been devalued over the last few years. You shouldn't feel bad if during the last few months you've had to think for a few seconds before you could remember who one of the world champions was at the time.

WCW has done a lot to further devalue its titles lately.

For instance, there was the **David Arquette** thing. As if it's not bad enough that a skinny actor became World champ for a few days, the way he won the belt was laughable. Even **Ric Flair's** World title win on May 15 wasn't that big a deal. Flair only earned his title shot by winning a battle royal on *Thunder* a few weeks earlier, plus word had leaked out beforehand that he was going to need shoulder surgery and would probably miss the entire summer.

Ric Flair

Then there was the World tag team title, which **Kronic** won by beating **Buff Bagwell** and **Shane Douglas** in a match in which the wrestlers had to count their own pins. It wasn't even clear until a few weeks later that Kronic was being recognized as champs.

Next to be devalued was the cruiserweight championship. **Chris Candido** had been a strong champion after beating **The Artist** on April 16, but then he signed for a match pitting him and **Tammy** against **Crowbar** and **Daffney**. Another instance in which a singles belt was defended in a tag team match! Daffney got the pin on Tammy, and no one could figure out afterward whether that meant Daffney or Crowbar was the new champ.

You might not think the WCW hardcore title ever meant much, but how fair was it for **Vince Russo** and **Eric Bischoff** to force **Terry Funk** to defend it against all **The Misfits** simultaneously on May 15? Thanks to **Booker**, Funk won, but would The Misfits have really had anything to be proud of if one of them won the belt?

What does all this mean to the ratings? It means it's hard for us to strongly consider WCW champs for the highest spots in our Top 10. Not that they don't earn these spots every now and then, but when the important belts are being defended in such ridiculous matches and are changing hands so often, it's hard to argue that they're very prestigious.

The only singles champion in WCW to make the Top 10 was U.S. titleholder **Scott Steiner**. Kronic did, however, take the number-three spot in the tag rankings.

At the same time, the WWF is doing its best to make its titles more prestigious. **Triple-H** has turned out to be a very strong World champion. He held the title for three months at the outset of 2000 (a long time by current standards) and became the first unpopular superstar ever to prevail in a WrestleMania main event. By the time **The Rock** *finally* unseated Triple-H four weeks later at Backlash, it seemed like a truly special accomplishment. Because he regained the WWF belt at the very end of this ratings period, we ranked him four spots below The Rock this month.

The Intercontinental title needs a little more work. Nothing against **Chris Jericho** and **Chris Benoit**, the two most recent I-C champs, but when you have **Vince McMahon** and Triple-H going to absurd lengths to take the belt from Y2J and put it on "The Canadian Crippler," aren't we being discouraged from taking that title seriously? At least Benoit and Jericho are both terrific athletes, so their matches have been exciting to watch. Because he was champ for most of the month covered by these ratings. Benoit took the number-six spot in the Top 10.

Chris Jericho

The WWF World tag team title means a lot now because there are so many strong tandems gunning for the belts. In fact, because of their ability to retain those belts since WrestleMania, champions **Christian** and **Edge** got the two spot in the tag ratings, below only IWGP champs **Yuji Nagata** and **Manabu Nakanishi**.

As for the WWF European and hardcore straps, they may not be prestigious, but it's been a lot of fun watching the champions defend them.

That's all for now! If you have any questions or comments regarding our ratings, we want to hear from you. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. □

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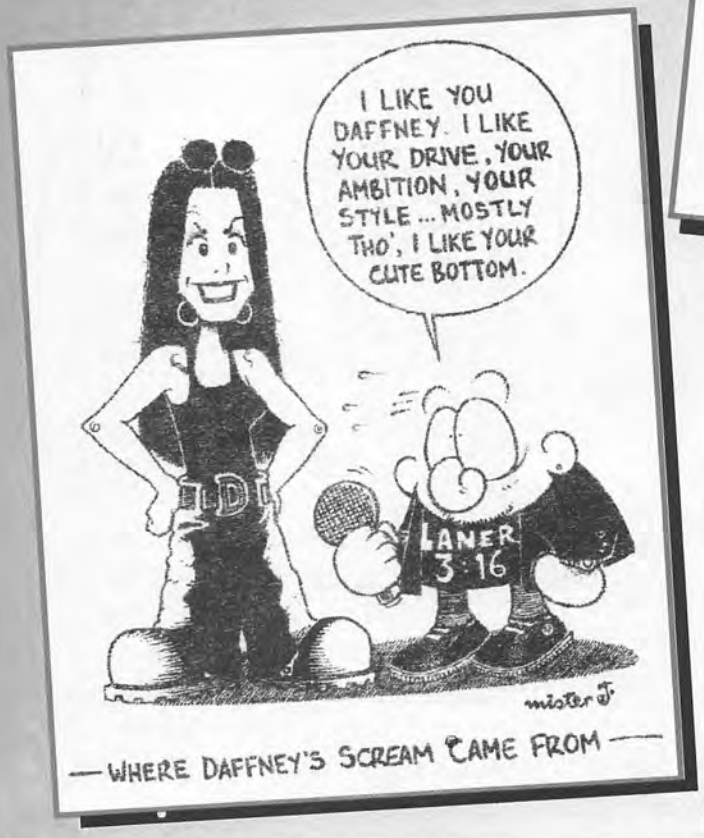
By Jason Conlan


I LIKE YOU DAFFNEY. I LIKE YOUR DRIVE, YOUR AMBITION, YOUR STYLE... MOSTLY THO', I LIKE YOUR CUTE BOTTOM.
LANER 3:16
mister J.
—WHERE DAFFNEY'S SCREAM CAME FROM—

HOW VAMPIRO SPENDS HIS OFF DAYS—
I AM SO BORED. I THINK I'LL GO AND TAPE SOME WORMS TO THE CONCRETE, AND SEE IF I CAN GIVE ANY BIRDS HERNIAS...
mister J.

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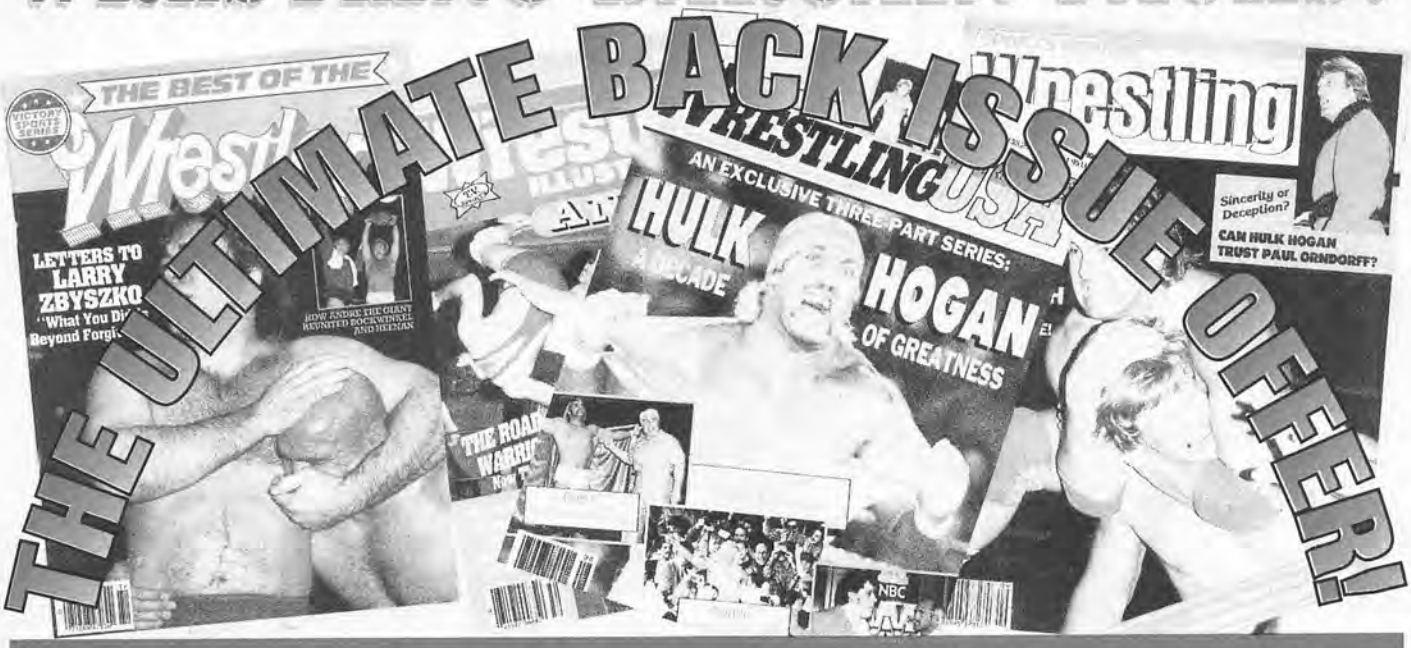

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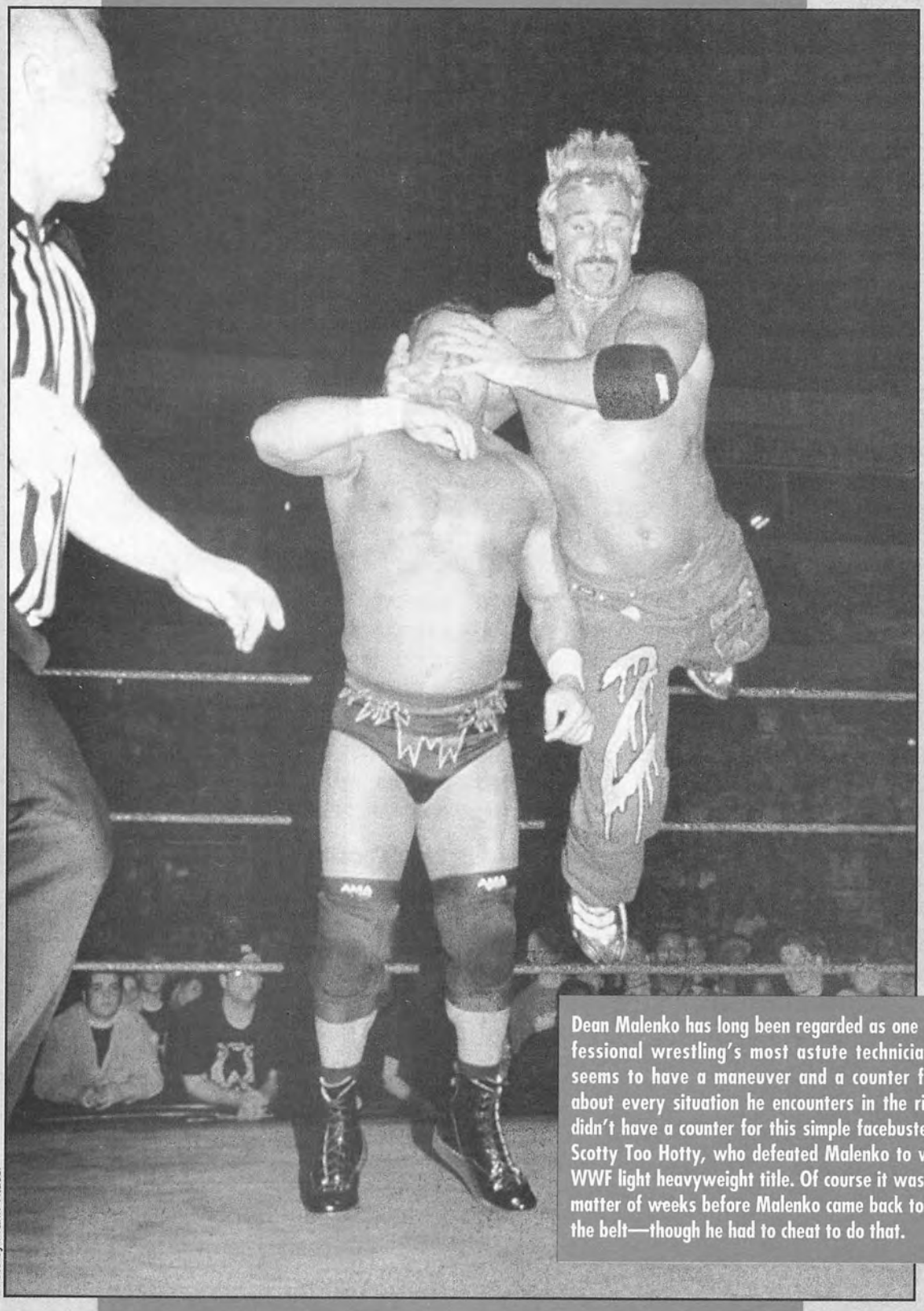
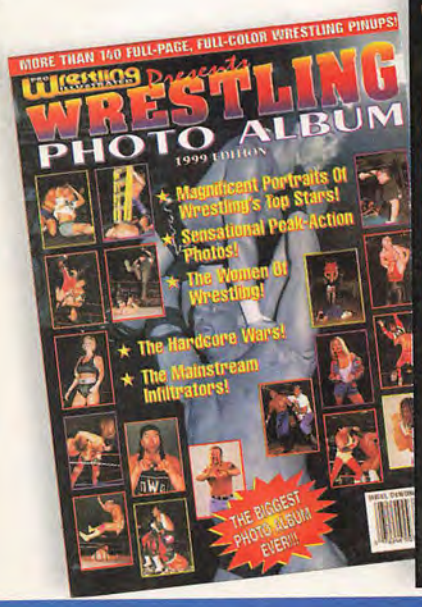


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Dean Malenko has long been regarded as one of professional wrestling's most astute technicians. He seems to have a maneuver and a counter for just about every situation he encounters in the ring. He didn't have a counter for this simple facebuster from Scotty Too Hotty, who defeated Malenko to win the WWF light heavyweight title. Of course it was only a matter of weeks before Malenko came back to regain the belt—though he had to cheat to do that.



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